

2009–2010

ANNUAL GIVING REPORT

ROBERT C. PARKER SCHOOL



LEARNING *Dangerously*

Tugging on hip-waders and inching over the rocky bottom of the Hudson. Standing up to speak at assembly. Staring a giant therapy dog right in the eyes – and reaching out your hand. Reading the first draft of your essay aloud to the class. Hooking up a string of batteries, wires and light bulbs and standing back.

At Parker, we not only allow dangerous learning, we encourage it! Otherwise, how would students understand the strength of the river current? Or that the therapy dog won't bite if they approach with gentleness?

For students these experiences feel challenging and exciting. They ignite curiosity and passion.

Taking risks in a supportive environment makes a difference for students. It allows them to experiment, create and discover. The hands-on, self-directed experiences that Parker teachers design for students give them

confidence and skills that will sustain them for a lifetime. Students acquire attributes that lead to success in a world of change and wonder.

Parker alumni remember cleaning up the stream in Wynantskill or painting a jungle on the school walls. They remember the daunting prospect of writing a thesis – and that they actually accomplished it. As Robert C. Parker School reaches its 20th Anniversary, our graduates reach out to tell us that Parker made the difference for them. Meet some of our oldest alumni (still under 30 years old!) through these pages, and see how learning dangerously has led to living fully.

Meg Taylor

Meg Taylor, *Director*

STEM Week makes a difference in dynamic learning

During STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Week, 6-7s became engineers in Space Tourism companies. Staying within a budget, each company's charge was to design, build and launch a rocket for space travel; write, produce and screen a promotional video; and analyze the group process with a reflective self-evaluation.



Parker Alumni Making a Difference...

...In Renewable Energy

After Parker, **Dan Sachs '99** went to Hotchkiss, then Harvard, majoring in a combination of economics, history, social theory and sociology. He started work at a real estate private equity firm in Chicago, but found that his vision for a more sustainable type of urban architecture was impractical. Dan started to focus on what would be required to enable our system to survive and function despite declining supplies of low-cost fuel. Last May, he went to work for an alternative energy firm in San Diego.

"I made my way to Sapphire because algae-based fuels offer one of the most promising platforms for a sustainable, scalable, fungible fuel source. The company is developing a slew of needed technologies – we are evolving organisms (e.g., pest-resistant, high-yield, fast-growing species) and developing all the associated technologies and infrastructure needed to grow and harvest algae and to extract and refine the oil. My role is in business strategy and finance: closing government financing, raising private market equity financing and developing techno-economic models."

Dan's eighth grade thesis was on Frank Lloyd Wright.

...In Science and Medicine

Lindsay Chura '98 says, *"I look back on my Parker days as a time when my imagination was stretched in new directions, and in the process I discovered a love for science. For me Parker embodies more than just a school – it is a community/family. The lively classroom discussions and nurturing environment make Parker the perfect place to ignite a passion for learning."*

Lindsay graduated from Holy Names, then Mount Holyoke in 2006 with a double major in Biology and Psychology. She was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to conduct clinical research in reproductive endocrinology in Australia. After her Fulbright year, Lindsay worked as a health and science writer at *U.S. News & World Report* in Washington, DC as an AAAS/APS Mass Media Fellow. In 2008, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation named Lindsay as a Gates Cambridge Scholar. At present, Lindsay is a PhD candidate at Trinity College, University of Cambridge, and is pursuing neuroimaging research at the Cambridge Autism Research Center.

...In the Arts

Ben Sher '97, graduated from Doane Stuart and Sarah Lawrence. Ben wrote his 8th grade thesis at Parker on violence and censorship in movies. Ben has been living in Los Angeles since 2007. He is a PhD candidate in Cinema and Media Studies at UCLA, teaching and working on his dissertation. His tastes in movies and the films that have most influenced him haven't changed substantially since his years at Parker.

"I've been teaching American Film History for the last three years. The lessons I learned from the teachers at Parker are very deeply embedded in my brain. I am completely unable to stop identifying with my students, and seeing them each as individuals (it can, I admit, be a curse when I'm grading!). It is an understatement to say that I'm grateful, every day, that I had such wonderful teachers, role models and friends. I still miss Parker!"

Parker Potpourri...

Planet Parker Pavilion Erected



A New York State grant for sustainable energy education was inspiration for the Planet Parker program. The newly built pavilion classroom will be a stag-

ing area for outdoor science education and summer camp activities. Also making a difference: 15 computers, science lab improvements, water testing materials, a new trail system and Planet Parker Coordinator Jamie Crouse. Thank you to Kurt Arnold, Christine Cunningham, Doug McClaren, the trail blazers, and the Planet Parker Committee!

"Grandfriends" Cookbook Raises Dough

Grandparents Betty Blakney-Lawrence with Jean Hirokawa and Sandy Eddy formed a committee to solicit delicious recipes from Parker families. They produced and sold the **Grandfriends of Parker School Cookbook**, raising over \$1,900! Thanks also to Margery Whiteman and Erik Eddy for underwriting.

Pre K Playground Improved



Funds from Pre K parents and the Cunningham and Arnold families make a difference for the Pre K playground, bringing shade and grace. The pergola will be planted with leafy vines.

20th Anniversary Special Events

March 23

Panel Discussion

Educating for 21st Century Success featuring Susan Engel of Williams College, Boris Pluskowski of *The Complete Innovator*, Trudy Hall of Emma Willard and Dan Wallace of Vicarious Visions. Moderated by Karen Hitchcock, former President of UAlbany.

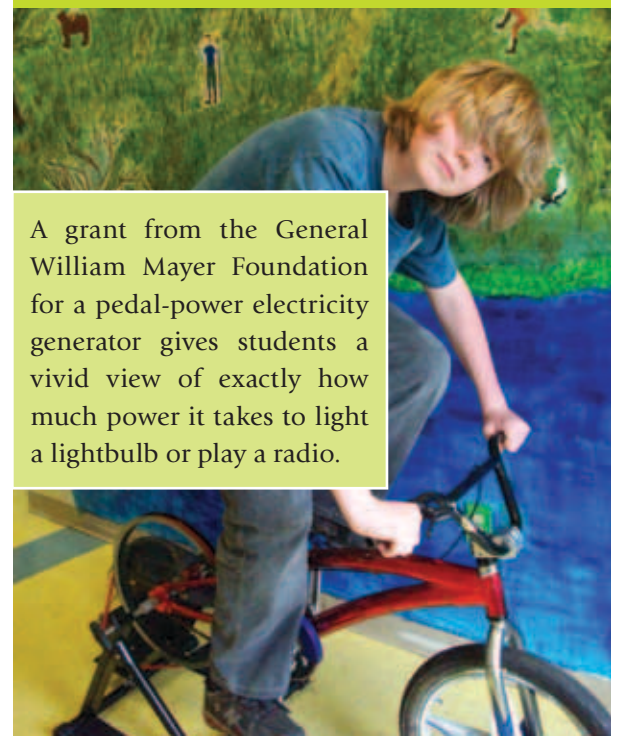
April 2

5K Family Trail Run on Parker's new trails

June 4

Celebration and Reunion
rcparker.classquest.com

Pedal Power Enlightens



A grant from the General William Mayer Foundation for a pedal-power electricity generator gives students a vivid view of exactly how much power it takes to light a lightbulb or play a radio.

Intern Pitches in at Parker



Lydia Youngman '08 made a difference by spending her Emma Willard spring break as an intern in Parker's K-1 classroom.

Meg Taylor and Susie Merrett hit the road to visit with Parker alumni in April.



At the Washington D.C. gathering with Sadie Banks '03, Susie Merrett, Marc Riviera '94, Matt Martin '99, Jon Lord '97



In New York City with Jessie Pickard '98, Susie Merrett, Lily Meyer '97, and Meg Taylor

Annual Fund Donors

Robert C. Parker School expresses its appreciation to the parents, past parents, alumni, faculty and friends who made a difference by donating to the Annual Fund and other projects during the past year. This strong demonstration of support recognizes the exceptional program that Parker offers its students.

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Gifts of \$5000+

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Marlena McNamee '94
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Sam Merrett '97
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Matthew Martin '99
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Kate Pressman '01
Susan and Seth Powell
Miriam Raider-Roth and Mark Raider
Imani Randolph '10
Michele Ridgeway
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Edith Denney
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This report recognizes contributions made between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list. If we have made an error or omission, please accept our apologies and contact Laura Mandelson at 518-286-3449 or lmandelson@parkerschool.org to make a correction to this list.



Nancy Lord with Jonathan '97 and Alex '00 attended Celebrate May Day on Planet Parker, the Auction Gala at the Barn in the Rensselaer Tech Park in May. The Auction Committee put on a spectacular event! The Providers played, guests popped balloons for prizes and bidding was lively. The event raised \$20,000 for financial aid and school programs. Thank you to the many volunteers and sponsors who made the event so successful.



Auction committee members Caroline Melkonian and Wendy Kahn



Auction guests Drs. Michael and Benita Byrd (left) and Margie and Erik Eddy were enthusiastic bidders raising crucial dollars for financial aid and school programs.

Founding Faculty Honored for 20 Years of Service

Susie Merrett (left) and Carol Oko (right), Parker's founding Director and teacher, were honored for 20 years of making a difference with their creative energy, vision and dedication to bringing Parker's mission alive. The Board of Trustees and Meg Taylor, Head, presented Susie and Carol with a special tribute, and announced a 20th Anniversary Financial Aid Fund in their honor.



MISSION

Our mission is to offer a diverse group of children, through a rich and responsive program, the opportunity to become emotionally secure, intellectually vibrant, ethically aware and socially responsible.

MOTTO

In caring for our world, our community and ourselves, we reach out to others with kindness, speak and act with respect, strive for understanding of differences, and share our time, our talents and our energy.

The Annual Auction Gala to Support Financial Aid and Programming makes it possible for students to come to Parker who otherwise would not be able to attend the school. Thank you to everyone who helped to make a difference this year!

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PARKER

It just makes sense.

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