“What the live creature retains from the past and what it expects from the future operate as directions in the present.”

John Dewey

Diversity / Innovation / Citizenship
Spring 2019

healthy citizenship

social justice
identity
democracy
active engagement
equality
curiosity
health
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An Introduction from Dan Frank

Healthy institutions cultivate relationships among their community members that allow each person to realize their individual aspirations in an equitable and inclusive environment that supports the growth and development of all. This is what Colonel Parker meant when he said, “A fundamental principle of democracy is the responsibility of each for all, and all for each.”

Because Parker continues to focus on its founding mission to educate for citizenship and character in a diverse democracy, the school has a responsibility to be a sustaining resource for human development and civic education not only for our own community but also for our nation and the health of its body politic.

Healthy citizens know themselves and actively seek to know how others experience their own lives. They are aware of their own social and emotional sensibilities and know how to lead with respect, kindness and curiosity as they listen and engage with others who may experience the world differently than they do. And they know how to think for themselves and stand up with conviction, integrity and authenticity for what they believe as they also live with humility and openness to learn from others.

This issue of The Live Creature features the stories of various alumni who engage actively in their communities as dedicated citizens. You’ll also find features about specific curricular projects that highlight Parker teachers and students exploring dimensions of identity and memory, civic participation and research, illustrating the attuned educational opportunities to foster healthy engagement in learning about ways people experience life in our society and world.

Parker educates students who grow as citizens through their direct experience in acquiring skills in creative collaboration, perseverance in problem solving and empathy in conflict resolution. These qualities of citizenship and character contribute to the healthy development of people who can apply their knowledge and self-confidence in concrete and responsible ways to improve the overall health and life of citizenship both in our school and in the world.
Parker Alumni Demonstrate Healthy Citizenship in Professions and Passions

Healthy Citizenship

There are many ways to define the idea of being a “healthy citizen” and put that concept into practice. Many alumni take what they learn while at Parker and after graduation and devote significant amounts of time and energy to activities that embody the idea of healthy citizenship, whether in their professional lives or their free time. Following are just a few examples.

Bennet Greenwald ’50 has put his professional experience as president of The Greenwald Company—a real estate investment, management and development company run by his children, Parker alumni Jennifer ’84, Hubie ’85 and Allison ’88—to good use in his personal life. He has been volunteering with agencies addressing homelessness for more than 20 years, first inspired by Michael Harrington’s The Other America, published in 1962, when Greenwald was at the University of Pennsylvania.

“The book was required reading in several classes at Penn,” he recalled. “Harrington wrote in the introduction: ‘That the poor are invisible is one of the most important things about them…They are not simply neglected and forgotten as in the old rhetoric of reform; what is much worse, they are not seen.’ Harrington’s moving analysis created both awareness and shame in me that the wealthiest nation in the world could do so little about the ravages of poverty on its people.”

For 14 years, Greenwald served on the board of Monarch Schools, which has educated San Diego’s homeless youth for more than three decades. “During my time there, we were able to triple the school size and student population, which today is 350 students. San Diego and its leaders have demonstrated the wit and the will to make education available to homeless youth. We hear politicians and pundits flap their mouths and wave their hands about ‘the homeless’ as if that undifferentiated and thoughtless rubric meant something.”

Greenwald is an 11-year board member of Second Chance, which aims to reduce recidivism, unemployment and homelessness by providing workforce readiness training and

Bennet Greenwald.
job training programs to youth and adults, as well as transitional housing, behavioral health treatment and financial literacy to help participants reach self-sufficiency. "Second Chance has evolved, changed leadership, increased the population it serves, enhanced and broadened its programs and tripled its budget," Greenwald said, "and we continue to redefine and deepen its mission."

Parker’s first principal exemplifies the meaning of healthy citizenship for Greenwald. “Flora Cooke said, ‘Take responsibility.’ The statement on Parker’s proscenium teaches us to be part of a model home and a complete community. So we need to do something. I encourage people to write a check to Monarch or Second Chance or Parker. Without support, nothing happens.”

Aspiring physician Cindy Avila ’12, currently a graduate student in the Duke University School of Medicine Biomedical Sciences Program, is striving to do more than practice medicine; her particular interest lies in clinical medical ethics, which she first encountered as an undergraduate at the University of Chicago, when she was an intern at the MacLean Center for Clinical Medical Ethics. After graduating, she became a senior research associate for the Center, supervised by Dr. Mark Siegler, MD, MACP, considered one of the founding figures of the clinical medical ethics field.

“Clinical medical ethics focuses on clinical cases and the implications of decision-making, resource allocation and interactions that occur between a health care provider and a patient,” Avila explained. “Research in this field has implications in every aspect
of high-quality patient care. Subdisciplines include end-of-life studies, transplant ethics, ethical and policy issues in genetics and genomics, the intersection between religion and medicine, global health ethics, ethical implications at the intersection of health policy and economics, health disparities and community-engaged research ethics and much more.

Avila’s experience in this field has manifested itself significantly. “You quickly learn that, in hospitals or clinics, typically defined by regulations and standards, when it comes to clinical medical ethics, the question is not whether these rules will be broken, but when—or, rather, under what circumstances? When we have our weekly ‘ethics case conference,’ we might consider such questions as: Should the HIV status of a patient be shared with his wife? Can a surgeon refuse to perform a life-saving surgery on a patient who declines blood transfusions, such as a Jehovah Witness? Can the surgeon alter the surgical procedure to decrease the potential blood loss? What if this alteration increases other morbidity/mortality factors? What should be done when a surrogate decision-maker appears to be making decisions that are not in the best interest of the patient?”

This experience early in her career has helped Avila appreciate the difficult decisions that physicians address every day, which medical students may not learn about. Avila’s exposure to academic medicine—research, presentation of ideas and teaching—has influenced her decision to pursue an academic career, and she hopes to work someday at a teaching hospital.

When a patient sees or interacts with a physician who looks like them, or speaks their language, there is an unexplainable, immediate bond—a feeling that some might describe as ‘trust’—that has been proven to improve health outcomes.

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As she prepares to apply to medical school, Avila—who is half Polish and half Mexican and fluent in both languages—recognizes the need for a more diverse physician population that represents the patient population. “Many students who aspire to become physicians often don’t make it this far. The lifestyle of a premedical student is demanding—rigorous coursework in physics, biology, chemistry, organic chemistry, biochemistry—and those are just the basics! As we like to say, this is a marathon, not a sprint!

“I feel an obligation to continue pushing forward and serve the Polish and Spanish immigrant populations, not just because I want to, but because I can. And the effect this has on future generations can be quite dramatic. When a patient sees or interacts with a physician who looks like them, or speaks their language, there is an unexplainable, immediate bond—a feeling that some might describe as ‘trust’—that has been proven to improve health outcomes. For me, if there is one young girl who sees me
and then gets the idea that she wants to become a physician, I would consider my entire career as a premedical student thus far to be worth every single minute.”

Avila has had the good fortune to be mentored by Dr. Pilar Ortega, a founding member and current president of the Medical Organization for Latino Advancement (MOLA). “MOLA is a truly incredible organization, particularly if you want to network and meet Latino/a medical students and physicians,” she said. “Feeling a sense of community, being supported and supporting others within this community are essential in the equation to increase Hispanic/Latino representation in medicine.”

Griffin Amdur ’14, another Penn alumnus, came across the idea of a furniture bank—an organization that acts as an intermediary between people with extra furniture and those without it—during his junior year. “I realized used furniture and household goods have little to no monetary value but typically have practical use,” he explained. “I discovered furniture banks did not exist in many cities, including Chicago, and thought that building such an organization would have a positive impact on the community.”

Amdur discussed the idea with two friends, and together they created a business plan, which they submitted to a Penn competition, The President’s Engagement Prize. The team won a grant that provided the seed funding to launch the nonprofit Chicago Furniture Bank (CFB) in August 2018.
At first, Amdur and his two partners physically moved all the furniture while simultaneously trying to manage operations and grow the business. An article in the Chicago Tribune inspired numerous furniture donations, relationships with many nonprofit partners and a generous donation from a local philanthropist. “After seven months, we’ve created partnerships with 140 social service agencies, furnished 440 homes for 1,100 people and recycled approximately 240 tons of furniture, most of which would have likely ended up in a landfill,” he said.

CFB recently furnished its 625th home; the organization furnishes 25 to 30 homes each week and has 17 employees, most hired through workforce development programs such as Chicago Cred and Cara. Fellow Parker alum Reilly Bruce ’14 has joined CFB as director of operations.

Although CFB is approaching only its first anniversary, Amdur is already thinking about growth; he hopes CFB will furnish 1,000 homes in 2019 while covering a larger percentage of its operating expenses through earned revenue. “Additionally, we are building our workforce development program. Our goal is to train and provide work experience for drivers, movers and carpenters so they will use their new skills to advance their careers.”

After many years as a volunteer and fundraiser for progressive causes and political campaigns, Sara Berliner ’94 started Vote Like A Mother (VLAM), which derived its name from a sign she carried at the March for Our Lives in New York City.

“I wanted to make parenthood a lens for politics and galvanize people to take action as advocates and accomplices—to spend more time acting not out of self-interest but in the interests of others, like parents and caregivers do.”

“The highlight of our work is being part of our clients’ next chapter as they choose furniture for their new homes,” Amdur said. “Almost all our clients have been living in shelters or temporary housing due to homelessness or domestic violence. Typically, they come to CFB after waiting on the supportive housing waitlist for an extended period of time. When they are in our showroom, our clients have the opportunity to take ownership of new beginnings by handpicking items for their new homes. We feel lucky to be part of such an important time in their lives.”

“I wanted to make parenthood a lens for politics and galvanize people to take action as advocates and accomplices—to spend more time acting not out of self-interest but in the interests of others, like parents and caregivers do,” Berliner described. “When people from different generations, backgrounds and genders reacted enthusiastically to the slogan, I realized I had an opportunity to grab attention and right away pass the mic: I could lift up the voices and efforts of women working for progress, provide parents and advocates with opportunities for civic participation and bring empathy and humor to political conversation in pursuit of inclusion, equity, justice...
The Live Creature

and love. VLAM has become an inclusive and substantive movement: a place to amplify and discuss key issues for families; highlight politicians bringing their whole ‘mom’ selves to work; promote the necessity of political engagement at all levels, from community on up; rally behind critical causes; and celebrate wins for parents in public life.”

Berliner believes the movement's enormous popularity is a reaction to the current cultural moment. “It has energized more people to pay attention to the sexism in American culture and politics, from pay gaps to abysmal family leave, from lack of protections for domestic violence victims to the fact that while 86 percent of U.S. women are having children, less than five percent of the current members of Congress are mothers. If we had more moms at all levels of government, we might have policies that reflect care for others in health care, immigration, criminal justice, voting rights, campaign finance, government accountability, the military, domestic violence, the economy and our climate.

“I think my effort resonates because you don't have to be a mother to vote like one. We were all born to mothers, and plenty of people act as mothers to friends and pets. I think lots of folks recognize the role and value of mothering in their lives or in the world, so the slogan has broad appeal. I also think people like to wear their heart
on their sleeve, and if that includes cool t-shirts and tote bags made ethically and sustainably by a mom-founded social enterprise, all the better.”

Through her website, Berliner has sold thousands of merchandise items, with profits going to mom-centered nonprofits, supporting organizers doing the hard work of daily activism and advocacy. She has created dozens of VLAM pop-ups at political fundraisers, rallies and marches, raising money for Families Belong Together, Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, Emily’s List, Eleanor’s Legacy and candidates like Cynthia Nixon. On social media, she shares stories that personalize issues relevant to families, and she curated and moderated a panel discussion at HATCH in Manhattan before the 2018 midterm election, with activist moms sharing wisdom on raising inclusive feminist children.

Berliner has finished a proposal for a Vote Like A Mother book containing personal stories, short essays, poems and artwork created by inspiring people around the world whose political, social or cultural work reflects the idea of voting like a mother. She appears on podcasts frequently and plans to continue speaking at conferences around the country. “Two other initiatives that may take on their own lives: addressing the dire lack of civic education through a new project in children’s media (where I’ve spent most of my career) and a website connecting organizations that need volunteers, donations or amplification with concerned citizens seeking effective opportunities for civic participation.”

For Berliner, healthy citizenship is a year-round activity, not just during election cycles. “From community efforts like your neighborhood association or local public library to your local school board and city or town government, to county and state politics and over to national campaigns and legislative efforts—these all require care and feeding if our democracy is to not just survive but improve.”

Harrison Alter ’80, whose work as a medical professional and instructor has concentrated on emergency medicine, developed a profound interest in the relationship between medical care and the way patients live their lives. “I started thinking

Social emergency medicine re-conceptualizes the structure and practice of emergency care to incorporate information about patients’ social context—where and how they live, what they eat, where they work and more.

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the Andrew Levitt Center for Social Emergency Medicine and set about to build a new field.”

Social emergency medicine reconceptualizes the structure and practice of emergency care to incorporate information about patients’ social context—where and how they live, what they eat, where they work and more.

Alter is thrilled with the way the field has evolved since Levitt’s inception. The Center collaborated with the 40,000-member American College of Emergency Physicians to convene a consensus conference, “Inventing Social Emergency Medicine,” in 2017, which led to the creation of a Social Emergency Medicine section in the college that Alter chairs.

Levitt has grown quickly as well, obtaining grants for Emergency Department (ED) HIV and hepatitis C testing and links to care, ED-initiated medication for opioid use disorder, partner violence work, efforts combating human trafficking, involvement with homeless and unstably housed patients and workforce development programs. The field of social emergency medicine has grown to spawn academic divisions and sections in Departments of Emergency Medicine throughout the country. “But,” said Alter, “in 20 years, I’d like to see the field evaporate, and we will be left with emergency medicine, a field that in its very DNA incorporates social context into clinical care.”
Alter looks to his upbringing for the roots of healthy citizenship in his life. “We were raised, at home and at Parker, to do more than stand there and convert oxygen to CO2. We were raised to act, to leave things better than we found them, to make an effort to chip in to civil society. My mom marched us up and down Broadway with brooms; if the shopkeepers wouldn’t sweep, she’d say, her kids will. Healthy systems—biologic or organizational—are characterized by give and take. With my extreme degree of privilege, I have to give a lot to stay balanced. So I aspire to do that and sometimes I succeed.

“I’m forever grateful to Parker for the way the school always tried to balance cultivating individuals with emphasizing the importance of community. As faculty in a residency program that tries to achieve the same balance, I can see now what a challenge it is. But it’s so obvious on a national scale today how corrosive one can be in the absence of the other. I also appreciate the frequent reminders that there was a world outside Parker’s walls that demanded our attention and care.”

To learn more about the organizations these alumni are involved in, visit their websites.

**Monarch Schools:** monarchschools.org

**Second Chance:** secondchangeprogram.org

**Medical Organization for Latino Advancement:** chicagomola.com

**Chicago Furniture Bank:** chicagofurniturebank.org

**Vote Like A Mother:** votelikeamother.org

**The Andrew Levitt Center for Social Emergency Medicine:** levittcenter.org
More than 20 Upper School students put participatory democracy into action this election season when they served as election judges in both the primary and runoff elections, which ended with historic results: Chicago’s first black female mayor and first openly gay mayor in Mayor-Elect Lori Lightfoot.

Upper School history teacher Andy Bigelow is one of the 450 teachers nationwide who traditionally shares this opportunity, via the Mikva Challenge, with students early in the first semester to connect the school’s mission to local action. With each year generating more interest than before, Bigelow was proud of the sheer number of students who signed up this year, contributing 23 more student election judges to a growing army of more than 2,000 nationwide. After signing up, students received four hours of training to prepare them for their varied roles on Election Day.

“This is a tiring and worthwhile experience. After four hours of training and many hours of judging, they have jumped right into our participatory democracy. This supports our mission to create civic-minded and active citizens.”

Reflecting upon this annual opportunity, and this Chicago election cycle in particular, Bigelow said, “I am so proud of these kids, especially the ones who committed to three full days this year! This is a tiring and worthwhile experience. After four hours of training and many hours of judging, they have jumped right into our participatory democracy. This supports our mission to create civic-minded and active citizens.”

The Chicago Board of Elections and Mikva Challenge provide one of the most robust student judge programs in the country. Through the Mikva Challenge, more than 9,000 young people from 117 schools have learned about the voting process and had the opportunity to serve as election judges at polling places across the country on Election Day.
Thinking upon her experience at the polls, junior Natalie Daskal shared, “Election judging has been an experience unlike any other. I have now done it three times, and each time has challenged me in its own way and opened my eyes to members of my community I didn’t know before. I have learned how to deal with challenging people, how to occupy my time while sitting in one chair for 14 hours and how to stay calm when those around me are not. I now see the election process very differently; I see how insecure our system is and the work it takes to hold an election. What I have enjoyed most is meeting people in my neighborhood. I have met so many different people, all because of our democracy, and that is super-cool.”

After the February election, junior Eric Warshaw related, “I have had a great experience and learned a lot about the democratic process. Since I can't vote yet, election judging allows me to contribute to the democratic process. When I was informed of the opportunity, I knew almost nothing about the process of voting and now know how the ballot gets from the voter to election central. My fellow election judges were very nice and helped me understand the process. Recently, voting has become much more digital, making it difficult for older election judges to run polling places. I was helpful to them with overcoming tech hurdles. Interacting with the voters was fun. Many were excited to vote and interested in how the day was going. Next time, all that I want to change is the turnout! In the February election, only 33.5 percent of registered voters cast a ballot. Hopefully in April, we will have a high turnout so the people of Chicago can get the mayor they want.”
Senior Molly Taylor said, “This year, I have had three wonderful experiences serving as an election judge: in November for the national election, in February for the municipal round and in April for the municipal runoff. Each of the days began at 5 a.m., when I arrived at my polling place—a smoky, dimly lit American Legion meeting room—to set up the voting booths and registration tables. My primary responsibility was to verify voters before handing them ballots, which meant checking that the signatures on their applications matched the ones on record. On the national election day, my precinct was so busy that lines of people waiting to vote filled up the space. Though the crowds made the job overwhelming at times, I appreciated that we had a high turnout. My polling place on the February and April election days was much emptier, an unsettling indication of the low number of voters. An election judge I worked with expressed her exasperation over the turnout, noting that since the municipal leaders affect us at home, voters should consider the local elections as important as the national ones, if not more so. From my two fellow election judges, I became aware of the great commitment and time necessary to hold an election. I thought one day of the job was demanding, but they also managed early voting for the 16 days leading up to the February election day. Though the 14-hour days were long, as I helped disassemble the voting booths at the end, I couldn’t help but feel a rewarding sense of satisfaction. As a 16-year-old who knew practically nothing about voting a few months earlier, the fact that I helped adults practice their civic duty excited me. The experience instilled in me the importance of voting, and I look forward to casting my first ballot in the next year.”

Junior Micah Derringer commented, “My primary job throughout the day was to check in every voter and make sure that they got the correct ballot. It was super-interesting to see all the different types of people who lived in my precinct. Also, it was pretty interesting how few people showed up to vote. In my precinct, we had well under a 20 percent turnout.”
During the first semester of this year, students in my senior English elective, Identity Development in Contemporary Culture, spent time thinking about the concept of identity, beginning with the foundational work of Erik Erikson. As students moved into further study of defining identity, we looked at concepts like life course development and social identity, thinking about how our biological, social and cultural contexts impact who we are.

Identity development happens across time and contexts, and identity is held, simultaneously, by the individual herself and her society. In other words, my identity is based on my own sense of who I am as well as the ability of others to recognize who I am in similar ways and across a variety of contexts. Put another way, there will be components of my identity that are recognizable whether I am with my family, with my friends, at school or at work, as well as other areas of life in which I interact with others.

In December, in conjunction with reading Colson Whitehead’s *Sag Harbor*, students explored core frameworks of racial/cultural identity development through the works of Derald and David Wing Sue and Janet Helms, practitioners of color whose groundbreaking work to articulate the development of phases of racial identity for people of color and white people proved instructive to us all.

To synthesize and share our learning with the community, students created a gallery space on the fourth floor. Using the windowpanes as canvas as well as metaphor, students defined each phase of racial/cultural identity framework from both Sue and Helms and created a series of “I” statements to illustrate the thoughts of a person during each phase.

The activity helped students anchor concepts and also helped with another goal of the course: to situate themselves within known frameworks of understanding so, as they continue their own developmental path, they are equipped with tools to articulate who they are and how they are becoming themselves.

In addition to the articulation of each phase, I asked students to create an online discussion to reflect on the work. As I tell the students at the beginning of the course, I have an agenda: to provide them with the capacity to articulate who they think they are and how they got to be that way. The windows on Racial Identity Development are but one component of that agenda: a way to synthesize big ideas and, in the colorful, active writing and thinking that ensues, to consider the “frames” as they exist in the students’ own lives. In the reflections, I noticed a wide range of experience and emerging understanding of how this particular unit of identity study landed with the students.
Stage 1

Conformity

- I don't like my own race
- I must bleach my skin to look better
- I think that white people are more favorable than minorities
- I must assimilate to the dominant culture

Stage 1

Contact Status

- I don't see color
- I don't dislike minorities, I just don't trust them
- I don't think you act (black, chinese, etc)
- I think minorities are exotic
- I don't see how racism could exist

Unaware that racism exists and that I participate in it

taking large strides to be like the dominant culture
Windows of Racial/Cultural Identity Development: Student Reflections

Upon finishing the creation of and then looking at/through the windows of identity, Collins asked students to respond to a small set of questions for reflection. Here are the questions and some of the responses.

- What rings as real for you regarding the stages of racial identity development?
  Had you ever thought about your racial identity as something in development?
- What was challenging to you as you read the stages?
- Now that we have created our awesome gallery space, what are your thoughts about how folks might interact with it? What hopes do you have for the space, as temporary as it may be?

It was very uncomfortable for me to look through the different stages of racial identity development as something that is still growing. At Parker, there is a very prominent emphasis on learning about race and cultural identity and the roles and histories of them, so I expected that I would be within a sort of achieved state of understanding race. I’m still just a kid, and have not experienced much of what we talk about, so I haven’t fully developed my personal experience with my own race and culture. After creating this gallery, I think we should be able to open up the floor for teachers and students alike to look at themselves and determine who they are and what they believe in because I think Parker does a good job teaching us about racial and cultural issues, but doesn’t give us enough time to think them over ourselves. —Hans Burlin

Nothing was really challenging, but everything that was written in both models/frameworks is stuff that one could think of/assume on their own given that they have had enough experience or time with that sort of content. I guess the only challenging part to process from the Helms model was the section where the individual doesn’t even realize if they are being racist or not. I find that not impossible to believe, but hard to believe. I think the majority of the people who interact with it will try and find where they reside within the stages. I think it will attract more teachers than students because this is the type of thing that doesn’t attract students, and I think this is the case because most students believe they know the ins and outs of racism and their own identity, so they don’t find it necessary to be “re-educated.” My main hope is that it will attract more people than I think, and hopefully those people, even if it is for a few seconds, will consider the general idea of racism and remind themselves of what is seen as incorrect in today’s world. —Noel Fernandez
This multifaceted view of identity rung as real for me as I read the stages of racial identity development and looked at the experiences my peers and I have had with expressing our racial and cultural identity. Though I have previously not thought of racial identity as something in development, I have observed in myself, and in others, different stages of thinking about people inside and outside of the group. Though not necessarily challenging, it was interesting to see that my younger self would have agreed to a lot of the “I” statements in the early stages. As temporary as it may be, I believe the gallery has the potential of becoming a piece of a larger discussion about racial identity development for both people of color and white people in the Parker community. —Sesash Gutierrez

As a white woman, I have been given the privilege of not having to really delve into my own racial identity. Because of this, I haven’t had the space to try to figure out what stage I am in and how that affects how I see myself and others. Now that I have been given the resources and time to reflect on my own racial identity, I have been trying to discover what stage I am in right now, and that has really helped, especially with current events in our school. Since this activity focused on the racial identity stages of both people of color and white people, it gave a good contrast for me to see how racial identity can change depending not only on race, but where one lives, how one is affected by the media and how the dominant race group affects how one’s identity can shift. I hope that when people walk by our gallery, they take a moment to reflect on their own racial identity, maybe try to think about what stage they are in and think of reasons why they are in that stage. —Hannah Kershner

A re-creation of the content students created for their windows of identity and additional student reflections are available at fwparker.org/racialidentity.
(Top Row) = Derald & David Wing Sue Model of Racial Identity Development

(Lower Row) = Janet HELMS model of White Racial Identity Development

As you walk through, consider your placement amongst these stages.
A Stitch to Remember

Three years ago, an industrious group of students, following their advisor’s lead, turned to needles and thread to document the children lost to violence in our city. Launched in the 2016–17 school year, and currently in its final year, students have been hand-embroidering the name of each child onto a fabric square that will join others to make a larger quilt. The children these stitched names represent are significant, due to not only their loss to violence, but also their ages. They were too young to die.

The cloth and thread students use in this project are deliberate. Blue and white shirting (retrieved from Parker’s Garage Sale donations by parent Helen Wanderstock) serves as the surface for the names, which students stitch in red thread. These colors—white, blue and red—are the same as those on Chicago’s flag.

“When you look at what’s happening in our city, we need to ask ourselves why, examine ways to call attention, respond and evoke change.”

As Upper School science teacher, Elizabeth Druger and students in her advisory work on this project, they talk about the children who were killed, what they were like, what they must have brought to their families and who they could have become had their lives not been cut short by violence. As they reflect, advisory members embroider the names of the children, recognizing and honoring each child, the tragedy brought to each family and the impact on community.

In Druger’s eyes, this connection is a vital part of the project. “We use clothing to emphasize the very personal nature of each child our city has lost, which is often missing in media reports and sound bites. We keep asking, ‘How do we come back to this human piece?’ to remind ourselves we are in the midst of an ongoing tragedy. ‘How have we have become desensitized to losing children to violence?’ The red thread represents Chicago’s red stars, but also the blood of the children. Druger emphasized the injustice of the violence. “When you look at what’s happening in our city, we need to ask ourselves why, examine ways to call attention, respond and evoke change.”

Quilting is a vehicle of historic remembrance and community building in American culture. Druger shared, “When you think about quilting historically, it’s a documentation of the American experience by women. Early quilts served as maps for the Underground Railroad, depicting which way to go. Women weren’t accepted in the world of art for many years, so their quilts expressed the stories and aesthetics that mattered to them. You think about all the things that happened in and around quilts—people being born and dying—it’s a functional art as well. This quilt project is being completed by an all-female advisory, which remains all female by the choice of its members.”
Quilting is also part of the resurgence of interest in fiber arts as a means of public action. Druger remarked, “I view this convergence of civic engagement with something I’m really passionate about outside of school. I’m inspired by organizations like Women Against Gun Violence, Moms Demand Action and Quilting Bees in the St. Sabina community and the role of sewing and knitting in the social justice movement. This quilt, like many that have come before it, is a documentation of what is happening in our communities.”

Druger has been leading her advisees in this initiative for the past three years. Reflecting upon this project, as an educator and Parker parent, she said, “Personally, this has been deeply impactful. Ultimately, it comes down to what we choose to see and what we choose to ignore. Many of us have the privilege of not being affected by the ongoing violence in our city and this nation as a whole. So, while most quilts are created for comfort, this quilt is deliberate in its discomfort.”
Portraits of Kindness Connect the Classroom to the World

To help 7th grade students gain a better awareness of and appreciation for their peers in places around the world they have been studying in history class, history teacher Anthony Shaker partnered with art teacher Caroline Gardner and the Memory Project for some collaborative curriculum that added a layer of empathy and meaning to their studies.

The Memory Project is a nonprofit organization that invites art teachers and their students to create portraits for youth who have faced substantial challenges. These young people often don’t have photos of themselves, so receiving a special piece of artwork created by a student who lives elsewhere provides a special piece of art and lasting memory of a global connection.

Gardner originally heard about the organization on a podcast and was excited to share it with Shaker to determine the best ways to connect the initiative to their work. They selected two projects emanating from Myanmar and Syria—regions the students would be studying in class that year.

For the initial project, each student received a photo of a Rohingya child from Myanmar (ages 4–11) who currently lives in a Bangladesh refugee camp. Members of the Memory Project provided these photos to Gardner upon her request.

Next, Shaker led the students in locating Myanmar on a map and considering what it means to be a refugee. Students learned that the Rohingya are an ethnic group, the majority of whom are Muslim, and about 1.1 million have lived for centuries in predominantly Buddhist Myanmar, a Southeast Asian country.

In art class, Gardner distributed the Rohingyan portraits and shared each featured child’s name, age and favorite color. Parker students worked diligently to produce hand-drawn portraits of each child’s photo with a background reflecting the child’s favorite color and included photos of themselves with a short note on the reverse sides of their artwork.

These young people often don’t have photos of themselves, so receiving a special piece of artwork created by a student who lives elsewhere provides a special piece of art and lasting memory of a global connection.
Later in the year, Shaker introduced students to current issues surrounding refugees and internally displaced persons in Syria before Gardner again distributed photographic portraits and invited students to draw them. The Memory Project provided some appropriate language, and Gardner encouraged students to try writing a message in Arabic—through copying or tracing letters—on the back of their original art, providing an additional layer of meaning and reminding them of how we are all connected.

Following each experience, the class mailed their hand-drawn portraits, along with the original images, photos and notes, to their distant counterparts. Gardner and Shaker look forward to integrating the Memory Project into their curriculum each year. These portraits help children feel valued and important, realize that many people care about their well-being and possess a special piece of their childhood.

Visit fwparker.org/syrianportraits to view a video of students in Syria receiving their portraits.
India, with a population of more than 1.3 billion, certainly resembles a continent more so than it does a country. With up to 22 languages spoken, 29 states and nine recognized religions, the world's largest democracy, from top to bottom, has the largest variety of cultures of any country I have ever seen. Last winter break, I had the opportunity to explore the vast confines of India through many unique perspectives.

I was invited to attend the first-ever Indo-U.S. Symposium on Allergy and Asthma in New Delhi, which brought in top researchers and scientists from all over India, Europe and America. After that part of the trip, we traveled to five other cities across India and had the chance to experience completely different cultures, cuisines and lifestyles. The most eye-opening experience of the trip was visiting the villages and slums of India, the places that typically get a bad reputation around the world. I was blown away to witness the productivity and passion that encompassed these densely populated areas, completely transforming my misinformed perception of village/slum life in India. Segregation and juxtaposition of classes are dynamics that have loomed over India for centuries, so to set my feet upon the luxury and frugality in India, to see people who look just like me living lives that are, not better or worse, polar opposite of mine, and to get a taste of six vastly different cultures day by day has shed new light on my perspective of life in India.

I had the privilege of going on this journey because of the transformative Indo-U.S. Allergy and Asthma Symposium in New Delhi. Hosted by the director of AIIMS (the All India Institute of Medical Sciences), Dr. Randeep Guleria, the conference brought together students, doctors, patients, researchers and scientists from all around the world. The purpose of the conference was to start a relationship between India and the U.S. by bringing in top speakers from both countries to share their perspectives on the prevalence of asthma and allergies, their causes and ways to find solutions by working together. There were many speeches and chances for collaboration throughout the conference, many provoking more questions than answers for me. The most fascinating parts of the conference were the talks that touched on the many factors that influence
allergy and asthma both in the United States and in India. One of the speeches included a talk about the microbiome and the various types of gut bacterium that can develop at any point in someone's lifetime. The microbiome was discussed because of an ongoing theory called the "hygiene hypothesis," which states that humans are becoming too clean, causing the development of atopic diseases. An interesting study related to the microbiome actually compared cesarean sections (C-sections) to natural birth and found that natural birth exposes babies to good protective bacteria and may prevent an allergic child. There were also talks that focused on the environment and lifestyle in India and how it compares to the U.S. Although the environment of India is especially different from that of the U.S., with a much greater population along with more poverty and pollution, India has begun to develop and further "westernize" in some areas through transportation, architecture and cleanliness. After hearing about India from a professional point of view at this symposium, I was much more excited to examine India from the local point of view.

One of the main things I will remember from this experience was seeing the happiness on people's faces and feeling the warmth and love of the community.

After our time at the symposium, we made our way out to a small village in Khekra where we interacted with the locals, walked on the streets and immersed ourselves in the culture. What really made this village in Khekra unique was the development that was taking place to help improve the lives of the locals. A huge eye surgery hospital was being constructed in the village, which we had the chance to visit. It was amazing to see that many of the volunteers at the hospital were locals who trained to give back and help their community. Another amazing experience I will never forget was visiting the village school-children. As we drove up to the school, hundreds of school-children started to run up to the car with huge smiles to greet us like we were celebrities. One thing I observed while interacting with the kids was the flaws in how these children were educated. I saw them reciting and memorizing words and multiplication tables with ease, which seems like a good thing, except I was wondering if these kids actually knew conceptually what the words meant or where the numbers were coming from. I had a conversation with one of the community advocates in the village who increasingly advocates for education to be less about memorizing facts and more about developing capabilities and critical thinking skills. One of the main things I will remember from this experience was seeing the happiness on people's faces and feeling the warmth and love of the community.

In one of the last stops of our trip, we made our way to Mumbai, which was unlike any city we had seen in India. With skyscrapers left and right, fancy cars on the road, clean streets and sidewalks and the ocean surrounding the city, it felt very much like Chicago. Just like Chicago, though, the juxtaposition of the slums and the city was striking. We had the opportunity to tour the slums for a firsthand look at what life was like in these areas. The purpose of the visit...
was to change our perception of a slum. Many words that came to mind when I thought of “slums” before the visit included dirty, worn-down, sad and poor. By living in an increasingly materialistic world, it has become easy for me to think that money often equals happiness. After touring the slums, words that came to mind were efficient, diverse, happy and camraderie. The slum we visited was one of the most densely populated areas in the world, with more than 1 million people living in a 2.2-square-kilometer area. On top of that, this particular slum received 70 percent of the recyclable garbage produced by the entire city of Mumbai (18 million people). The “how” in “how do they do it”—meaning how are they able to manage their lives in such conditions—is one of my greatest wonders, and not only do they do it, but they do it with efficiency and happiness. The locals are incredibly self-sufficient, making things from pottery to pastries. Everything was extremely organized, and all the locals were interacting and always had smiles on their faces. The living conditions seemed horrible from our point of view, with five or six people living, cooking and sleeping in a room the size of an average bathroom, but no one was complaining. There was even one point when some cash accidentally fell out of my pocket without me noticing, and I started hearing several voices calling out to let me know. The kind of people that live there, the kind of organization and ability people have to make things on their own, combined with the kind of living conditions they are faced with, really makes me ponder whether or not there is only one right way to live.

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People who look, talk and act just like me could be living in a slum or a village, but that doesn’t make it a bad way of living. Outsiders are very quick to judge people merely based on how much they have or where they live when they don’t realize that those same people may judge them the same way. I have learned that just because something seems uncomfortable or different from the standards you grow up with doesn’t mean you must dismiss them or judge them in a demeaning way. No matter the religion, ethnicity or skin color, everyone has a story that is unique to them, a life that is meant to be lived and a way of living that defines who they are. Some may live in taller buildings and wear suits to work, while others may live in the slums and wear handmade clothes to work. It is the world we live in. But everyone in this world deserves respect, something I learned very clearly from the locals in the slums.
When Cara Meiselman moved to Chicago for a film editing job, she thought it was temporary. But 25 years later, she and her family—wife Deborah Ashen and sons Jonah, a senior, and Sam, a sophomore—have made a home here. And Parker has certainly had a long-lasting impact.

Before earning a communications degree from SUNY/Oneonta and studying film and television on the graduate level at Emerson College, Meiselman attended a small school growing up in Brooklyn. “There were 17 kids in my grade, so I understood the effect of a small class size on the relationship between teacher and student,” she shared. When it was time for Jonah to start school, they explored small, independent schools. “We agreed that a school with a progressive environment that could instill a love of learning was essential. We visited Parker twice and spoke with parents of older children, and something resonated with us,” Meiselman said.

When Jonah started JK, Meiselman said she was in “hook, line and sinker” thanks to his teacher, Frances Judd. “She helped me understand him as a four-year-old boy and to meet him where he was, at that moment. She understood that he would continue to reinvent himself as he developed and matured. I learned to be a better parent from Mrs. Judd. And we both learned to say, ‘May I’ instead of ‘Can I’! With few exceptions, my sons’ teachers have made their imprint—different ones for different reasons—but they’ve all recognized our kids as individuals, understanding their strengths and weaknesses and building on them always with the goal of helping them reach their potential. It may sound simple, but when a teacher inspires your child, it affects you as well. I am profoundly grateful for the many opportunities our sons have had to connect with their teachers.”

To illustrate her belief in Parker’s teaching methods, especially the value of hands-on learning, Meiselman recounts what she tells prospective parents when they come for the play parties: “I explain that I have two sons with very different learning styles. One counts on his fingers; the other saw the incorrect number of cookies on his plate and calculated the difference in his head. Today, each says math is his favorite subject. Rather than learning to memorize the correct answer, they have been taught to examine the problem and apply the appropriate processes to solve it. That’s true for every subject—discovery and problem solving. Beyond knowing the correct answer, you want to understand how you arrived there. Experimenting and making mistakes are part of the growth process. It’s not always easy, it’s sometimes painful, but it is essential to learning. And it’s something I think Parker understands.”
“Here’s another way of looking at it. It’s a life lesson. They are learning about themselves and finding their voices as students with the strong support of their teachers. When Sam was in 2nd grade, his teacher would ask how he got an answer; it was not necessarily the method she taught, and she welcomed that. When a teacher asks you to show your work, and makes you consider the whys and hows, there’s a purpose. Discussions at home, unrelated to school, will often echo the whys and hows they’ve learned to ask. They of course try to work the process in their favor!”

She gives credit to Parker math faculty for cultivating her sons’ enthusiasm for the subject. “I have to credit Robin Masters in 6th grade; she really turned Jonah around and made him understand that being a math student was so much more than memorization. He’s a problem solver. Ms. Lee and Mr. Wilson have each challenged his critical thinking. Ms. Olt has been an amazing teacher to both Jonah and Sam. Sam has always had a head for math and an interest in science, and his relationships with teachers in other subjects have inspired him. Mr. Fuder, Ms. Elliott, Mr. Greenstone and Ms. Seebold have fueled his interests beyond what came naturally. He has been involved in Model U.N. since 6th grade and enjoys rock climbing outside of school.”

Both of Meiselman’s sons have been active in Parker’s music program since 6th grade, with Jonah playing the saxophone and Sam playing the trumpet. “It’s been a great outlet to balance the intensity of their academic classes,” she said. “I love hearing them play together in Concert Band, and this year they are both in Jazz Band. Mr. Synakowski has been a continuous link and a spirited leader. Jonah starts at the University of Colorado Boulder in the fall and Sam is not looking forward to all the attention he is about to receive.”
It was Meiselman’s professional skills as a film editor that produced an entry point for her involvement at the school. “When Jonah was in JK, I asked Frances Judd how I could contribute to the classroom. She invited me in with my camera on several occasions, and I put together a video that was essentially a window into her classroom. Parents tell me they still watch that video.” She was able to do something similar for Sam’s JK class and has volunteered in some capacity ever since. “I’ve had the good fortune to collaborate with other parents all along the way: 8th grade montages, a lip sync video taped throughout the school and a photo book entitled A Day in the Life, Francis W. Parker School. This is the inaugural year of the Senior Tribute Book, and the grade chairs achieved their goal of 100 percent participation from the senior parents. That’s a big deal.”

She also helped create several videos for Parker’s biannual Scholarship Auction. She recalled, “What was especially interesting was looking back through older footage. It gave me a sense of the school’s history I never would have had. These were people who had graduated in the ’50s, ’60s, ’70s. I was working with filmmaker Tony Medici ’72, and it was important to him that I understood the history of the school. I approached it as a documentarian, a film editor with a strong affinity for the school because I recognized the strength of our sons’ education.

Rather than getting a report card, it’s more valuable to me to meet and listen to what a teacher tells me they recognize about my child, his strengths, what we need to work on and, especially in younger grades, what’s going on socially.

“Working on those videos gave me a great sense of the legacy of Parker. I recall alumni quoting lines from the renowned Parker English teacher Marie Stone: ‘If not now, when? If not you, who?’ One alumna mentioned being a 14-year student and the significance of her connections to teachers who had known her and her family during her formative years at Parker. There was a sense of comfort when Greenie saw her in the Upper School hallways, and she emotionally recalled a paper she wrote for Mr. Mahany about personal heroes. The teachers connect with each of their students and a trust develops, that’s what so beautiful about it.”
Appreciation for teachers extends to the parents as well, according to Meiselman. “Rather than getting a report card, it’s more valuable to me to meet and listen to what a teacher tells me they recognize about my child, his strengths, what we need to work on and, especially in younger grades, what’s going on socially. At the end of the day, it’s all about our kids. The reason I want to be here, to be within the walls of the school, is because of the profound effect it has had on my children, on their education, their development, socially and emotionally. Though it doesn’t replace family, they spend a significant amount of time here.”

Meiselman is in her second year as Grade Chair Liaison for the Upper School, one of the new roles on the Parents’ Association Executive Team that grew out of the Climate Assessment a few years ago. One of her goals has been to create a parent community in the Upper School that is reminiscent of the students’ community. “When students join the Upper School, their community extends beyond their grade,” she explained. “I’m trying to build a similar community among the Upper School grade chairs so we can know and support each other.”

Also a member of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, Meiselman believes she is educated at the school along with her children. “Years ago I attended a Nightviews discussion led by Upper School English and history teachers. The ideas shared that evening have stayed with me. It’s never too late to learn something new or consider a different perspective, and being in this environment has given me that opportunity.”
Andy Bigelow: Upper School History Teacher

Though Andy Bigelow grew up and started his teaching career on the East Coast, he had a little bit of wanderlust that eventually brought him to Chicago. Born and raised in Manchester, New Hampshire, he was ready to make a move by the time he reached 9th grade. “I realized I needed to go somewhere else and figure out who I was and who I was spending time with,” he recalled.

So he went to Vermont Academy, a small independent school that, unbeknownst to him at the time, his father had attended. Describing the school as “kind of like Parker but in the woods,” he found the direction he needed. “My history teacher, who was also my soccer coach, my lacrosse coach and my advisor, inspired me to imagine becoming a teacher.” Bigelow ended up, however, with a political science and government degree from St. Lawrence University, thinking he might become a lawyer.

“ Their goal is to make the school, the city, the state, the country a safer and more inclusive space. … We connect a history of marginalization through the lens of these civic labs and tie it to our curriculum…”

But the desire to be somewhere else once again took hold, so he and a friend took off for New Zealand, Australia and the islands, then settled for a while in Winter Park, Colorado, where he waited tables at a friend’s restaurant and worked as a ski instructor on the weekends. “I had no phone, no car and no TV, and I hitchhiked to work every day,” he said. Still thinking he would go to law school, he ran into an old friend and took a job as an insurance agent for a few years, transferring back to his hometown of Manchester.

As Bigelow looked at the managers and other people up the ladder, though, he realized that this was not the career for him. It was then his father reminded him he had said he wanted to be a teacher, so he earned an M.A. in teaching secondary social studies from Tufts University outside Boston in 1995. He taught World History at Masconomet Regional High School in Topsfield for seven years, then Needham High School for four years, both in the Boston area.

More change was coming. In 2006, Bigelow’s husband, Brian Lighty, received an attractive job opportunity, so they and their sons, Fernelis (age seven) and Malik (age nine), moved to Chicago. “I had never been to Chicago, and I thought it would be an industrial wasteland with a dirty lake,” he shared. “I had no idea it was going to be such a great city and a great life.” Their sons started at the Nettlehorst School, then came to Parker for middle and part of high school.
At first Bigelow was a stay-at-home dad, but once he felt like his sons were settled into their new life, he wanted to go back to work. He found Parker through the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras, which recommended Upper School music teacher Betty Lewis for private instruction in violin. “While Malik took his lessons, I’d walk around the building and take it all in. I wasn’t used to seeing kids in the halls, but there were interesting things on those walls. Then I watched rehearsal for the musical, and I saw Dr. Frank come in, and I loved watching him watch the rehearsal.”

In spring 2007, he applied for a full-time teaching position at Parker for the following year, but the day after his interview, Upper School History Department Chair Jeanne Barr called him. “She asked if I could start the next day because a long-term sub had suddenly left, and I thought, ‘Absolutely!’ Even though I still didn’t know about the full-time position, this was going to be a great way to get to know the school.”

Since starting full-time in the fall of 2007, Bigelow has taught U.S. History, primarily to juniors. “I also teach one semester of history on world revolutions, which was inspired by my high school teacher;” he described. “The focus is on the globalization of revolutions—the French revolution’s impact on the Haitian revolution, the Haitian revolution’s impact on the Russian and Chinese revolutions. I love being able to create my own sophomore seminar. We replaced the former structure with one that lets teachers teach toward their interests, so less is more, and I focus just on those four revolutions. I’m teaching what I love and know best.” In U.S. History, Bigelow focuses on the Civil Rights Movement, including such “unsung heroes” as Ella Baker, Jo Ann Robinson, Fannie Lou Hamer and Medgar Evers. Every four years, he also teaches a class on elections, which actively engages students as participatory citizens (see ”Students Exert Active Citizenship in a Historic Election Year” on page 13).
As part of the school’s community service program, Bigelow has created a Civic Lab called Creating Alliances to educate students to become advocates and educators in civil rights with regard to the LGBTQ+ community. “It doesn’t matter if they identify as part of that community or not,” he remarked. “Their goal is to make the school, the city, the state, the country a safer and more inclusive space. We meet a variety of civil rights activists who speak about this issue. We connect a history of marginalization through the lens of these civic labs and tie it to our curriculum, and it’s loosely integrated with the American Literature curriculum as well.”

Outside the classroom, Bigelow has derived satisfaction from several other roles he plays, including sophomore grade head with math teacher Vicki Lee for the past eight years. Early in their tenure, they organized a grade-wide retreat to Carbondale, Illinois. “I was a camper and camp counselor so I do this kind of thing well, but it was a lot to organize. We observed how it was done the year before, and we try to make it different every year—it’s probably the most progressive thing we do.” Bigelow and Lee also work with their sophomores on managing County Fair each year, and they take pride in some of the changes they’ve made. “We heard petting zoos were not treating animals well, so we replaced them with therapy dogs. The dunking booth and the cake walk have negative historical connotations in terms of race relations, so we replaced the dunking booth with more interactive games on the field and the cake walk with an obstacle course.”

Bigelow also enjoys serving as History Department Co-Chair—“I love having constructive conversations with teachers about various methodologies and skills and developing our craft”—and opportunities he’s had to travel with students and colleagues. With former staff member Martin Moran and current 8th grade English faculty David Fuder, he organized several Homes of Hope trips, which brought groups of students and parents to Ensenada, Mexico to build homes for people who were living below the poverty line but had enough resources to own a small piece of land. “We did it for six or seven years, and it was an amazing experience. The families we built houses for had more kids graduating from high school and more family members retaining their jobs.” He and English Department Co-Chair Theresa Collins have taken groups of students on historical and cultural tours to Memphis, Selma, Montgomery and Birmingham as well.

He considers it “an honor” to serve as an advisor and handles that responsibility in a specific way. “I choose only kids from the same grade so I can move up with them as they mature, so I’ve had only three advisories in my 12 years here, with a new group starting every four years. The conversations this group had as freshmen are very different from the conversations they have now. We do a family Thanksgiving, plan secret gifts before the holidays. I’ve got comfortable furniture so the kids can hang out in my room all day long.”

During his off hours, Bigelow enjoys relaxing at home in Andersonville. “It’s very diverse and feels like home for us as a gay biracial couple with kids.” He travels back to the East Coast to see family and often spends a fall weekend on the West Coast with a group of friends. He takes advantage of nice weather in Chicago by spending time at the lakefront. He and his husband are celebrating their 20th anniversary with a trip “east of the Iron Curtain”—to Budapest, Vienna, Prague and Dubrovnik. “And,” he noted, “I’m sure I’ll take in a lot of history along the way!”
Conway Collis ’66

Conway Collis has been a public servant and advocate for social change for more than 40 years. Since 2011 he has been president and CEO of GRACE (Gather, Respect, Advocate, Change, Engage), an organization that develops and seeks to implement comprehensive solutions to California’s child and family poverty, the highest in the nation. GRACE sponsored the Lifting Children and Families Out of Poverty Act, which mandated development of a comprehensive research-based plan to reduce child and family poverty through a Task Force that Collis co-chaired. The package of 18 bills recommended as part of the plan is now being implemented legislatively. A video showing an overview of the work is available at vimeo.com/320150992.

Collis graduated from Occidental College in 1970 and from Stanford Law School in 1974. He served as counsel and domestic policy advisor for U.S. Senator Alan Cranston (D-CA) from 1974 to 1978, finance director for the senator’s 1980 re-election campaign and finance director for the U.S. Senate Democratic Campaign Committee from 1980 to 1982. He was elected to the California State Board of Equalization, the state’s primary state tax and revenue agency, from 1982 to 1990, serving as chairman the last four years. He has also served as chairman of the California State Senate Bipartisan Task Force on Homelessness. From 1991 to 2003, Collis was president of a public policy firm that represented local governments, nonprofit housing developers, health systems and environmental groups.

In 2009 he initiated and led passage of a state Medicaid financing system that has generated more than $40 billion for health care for low-income Californians and $10 billion for children’s health care. Collis is a member of the California State Commission on Children and Families and the founding board chair of the National Foster Youth Institute.

I wanted to attend law school to provide a substantive background for government and politics. While working as a live-in counselor at a home and school for delinquent boys during my first two years in college, I realized the most effective way for me to make an impact on the youth who were in my care, and the larger issues of social justice and equality, was by impacting systemic change through government action. I wanted to attend law school at Stanford in particular because professors there were leaders in the fight for racial and economic justice. I was able to work on those issues as well as administrative controls over police practices and death penalty litigation for both summers during law school.
Working on the staff of Senator Cranston’s 1974 reelection campaign led to being recruited to work as a counsel on the U.S. Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee and domestic policy advisor to the Senator. Working in the Senate was an extraordinary experience. The committee itself was an all-star team of great senators, including Cranston, Kennedy, Mondale, Javits, Laxalt and others. The work confirmed the impact one can have working in government on the domestic policy issues I cared about.

As the senator geared up for his 1980 reelection campaign, I was the campaign finance director and then executive director of the fundraising arm of the Senate Democratic Campaign Committee until I ran for office in 1982. California is the only state with a five-member elected board running the state tax system. I was elected to it in 1982 and was chair for most of my second term. Through that position I was able to help make child care more accessible, address homelessness and eliminate tax policies that supported discriminatory practices.

The ongoing fight for social, racial and economic justice, and for the American Dream to apply with equal force to all, has been the focus of my adult life, and it actually began at Parker. I saw firsthand the prejudice faced by some of my teammates on the Parker football team. It just made me furious. As I gained more experience during college, I began to focus on how to best address these issues in a systemic way.
California has the largest number and highest percentage of children in poverty of any state in the country. Almost 2 million children—more than 20 percent of the children in the state—live below the poverty line, including a third of African-American and Latino children. More than 450,000 of California’s children live in deep poverty—below 50 percent of the federal poverty line. GRACE, sponsored by the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul, sponsored state legislation—now law—to develop a comprehensive, evidence-based plan to eliminate deep child poverty and reduce it overall by 50 percent in the state. A state task force that I co-chaired developed the comprehensive state plan. A package of 18 bills has been introduced in the state legislature implementing the plan, and I believe during the next year and a half they will all be enacted into law. More than 60 organizations are now partnering with us, and 50,000 individual Californians have joined the effort.

I know it is controversial at Parker today but my most formative experience was through football and the lifelong lessons and friendships developed with teammates. The drama program was also one through which I learned a great deal. It was through football that I learned that if you set your mind to something, you could achieve it. That is a lesson that has been of fundamental importance throughout my life. I continue to hope that Parker will reinstate the program. I also hope that Parker moves away from an athletic philosophy in which everyone makes the team and gets playing time regardless of skill and dedication. Parker is a wonderful school, especially in terms of helping to instill values and civic responsibility. The addition of those two measures would enable Parker to provide a more complete and well-rounded education.

Friendships, football games and practice, as well as baseball, Morning Ex, drama and the Senior Play (it was The Oresteia in 1966).

I have been incredibly blessed with a wonderful family, and we enjoy our time together enormously. We are all involved in social justice issues. My wife, Margaret Henry, has been a long time Superior Court judge presiding over a court dealing with neglected and abused children and the foster care system. I am board chair of the National Foster Youth Institute, so we have shared an involvement in that issue and the overall issues of poverty. Our older son, Rocky, was a pitcher in the Seattle Mariners minor-league system, later editor in chief of the Georgetown Law Review, now a lawyer in LA. He has remained committed to working on issues of equality, including as general counsel to the U.S. Women’s National Soccer Team Players Association. Our younger son, Luke, attended college on a football scholarship and has been a quarterback in the indoor professional football league for the last six years. In the off seasons, he has worked at an HIV clinic in Kenya, for labor unions and, most recently, on Stacey Abrams’ campaign in Georgia.
Alumni Reconnect

Josh Fine ’91 and Shawnelle Richie ’77 presented on the Media and Journalism panel at Career Day at Parker in March.

(L–R) Elizabeth “Lulu” Miranda ’84, former teacher Joel Dure, Maggie Steib ’84 and Alumni Association President Laura Maloney ’89 caught up at the Alumni of Color and Friends Luncheon at Cafe Ba-Ba Reeba kicking off Re-Ba Reeba Reunion Weekend 2019.

Class of ’18 members Chloe Wagner (L) and Jalen Benjamin visited with Upper School and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Coordinator Rolanda Shepard at the Washington, DC Alumni Regional Gathering.
The annual Rick Haskins Memorial Soccer Match took place during Reunion Weekend 2019.

Cooke and the Colonel 2019 raised more than $900,000. Parker thanks Co-Chairs Trish Rooney (L), Sasha Adler (second from L), Barrie Hananel (fourth from L), Ashley Netzky (fourth from R) and Meredith Soren Freese ’94 (third from R). Additional thanks to the event’s guest speaker, U.S. Representative from Massachusetts Ayanna Pressley ’92 (third from L). Also pictured are (second from R) John G. Levi Chief Advancement Officer Anedra Kerr and Principal Dan Frank ’74.

Upper School science teacher Xiao Zhang reconnected with class of ’18 members (L–R) Morenike Fabiyi, Talia Garg and Molly Weinberg at the New York City Alumni Regional Gathering.
Class Notes

Parker alumni: please send your class notes to Associate Director of Alumni Engagement Joe Bruno, jbruno@fwparker.org.

1944

Chris Holabird and Renee Hork Adelman Kass had a 75th mini-reunion in Los Angeles. He writes, “It was a very cheerful reunion like all our past reunions because we have been a class that has always really enjoyed one another’s company. Our surviving members are scattered all across the United States and still farther, one each in England, France and Germany. We once included two English war refugees who were sent to safety in America to escape the German bombing of London during World War II. They survived happily in Chicago and returned to London after the war but like so many others in our class, they sadly are no longer with us to share in our never-forgotten memories of the remarkable Parker experience that brought us all together, so many years ago.”


1951

Barry Hornstein writes, “I live with my wife Melanie in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Members of my class are all in our 80s, if still alive, and the senior class only had about 35 members in 1951. I’d love to hear from any survivors at Barry@cnsp.net or 505.986.1277.

1954

Annick Smith writes, “I am pleased to announce that I have a new book out—HEARTH, A Global Conversation on Community, Identity, and Place—published by Milkweed Editions last October, and a paperback edition will be available this October. I co-edited the anthology with Susan O’Connor and there is a foreword by Barry Lopez. Contributors include W.S. Merwin, Terry Tempest Williams, Pico Iyer, Chigozie Obioma, Bill McKibben, Luis Urrea, Natasha Thretheway and writers from the United States, Asia, Africa, Europe and Australia. These writers discuss the importance and meanings of HEARTH in their lives—or the disappearance or destruction of their own hearths and the hearths of others due to war, refugees, climate change and technological revolutions. Conferences and discussion groups with authors and editors are being held this spring at Chico Hot Springs, near Yellowstone National Park in Montana, at the University of Hawaii in Honolulu and at Seeley Lake, the home place of Norman Maclean. We are hoping to host more such events in cities, including Chicago, in the future. The anthology also includes a portfolio of black and white photos by the celebrated Brazilian photographer Sebastiao Salgado. We will soon have a website called HEARTH online for those interested in more information.”
1964

Dan Bloch writes, “I have been teaching for 50 years at Fort Worth Country Day School. I have the unique experience of being part of a three-generation family at two separate private schools. My father, sister, niece and nephew all attended Parker as did I. At FWCD I am an honorary alumnus. My daughter is a graduate, and my granddaughter is in kindergarten.”

1966

Peter Logan turned 70 with a nice party at Ghirardelli Square last October and is enjoying being a septuagenarian. He is semi-retired from law, active in the community and playing drums in a couple of bands. He saw Gabriella Starker ’67 on a Blues Cruise in February and writes, “It had been 52 years! It was great to catch up and share memories of Parker.”

Nora Marsh writes, “It was a pleasant surprise to read news of Steve Mosel ’63, whom I haven’t seen since he graduated, but remember fondly. I still sing with a chorus here in New Orleans and still honor the memory of Chauncey Griffith, as I am sure Steve does as well. Most of all, I was much encouraged and cheered to read about the younger Parkerites who have won elections lately and hope there will be many more to come. My classmate Conway Collis seems to have an entire clan of hard-working progressives, and hooray for them all. It is more important than ever that all of us who studied in an ‘embryonic democracy’ rally to protect our country’s values of truth and justice now. Love to the class of 1966, especially Bonnie and Saba.”

1969

Joseph Flynn writes, “My wife Catherine and I continue apace with our indie book publishing through our company Stray Dog Press, Inc. We published our 34th title, Powwow in Paris, the sixth book in our John Tall Wolf series, in February. Next up will be the 12th title in our Jim McGill/The President’s Henchman series, and after that will come a historical thriller. The McGill books have a 4.5-star average on a 5-star scale. The writing is a joy, but the marketing is work. Still, our mailing list continues to grow, and we’re closing in on 12,000 names. The President’s Henchman title was optioned by a production company in Los Angeles for two years, but no joy on that front. Not yet anyway. We keep on pushing. When you do something you love, you never have to—or want to—retire.” Check out his Amazon page at amzn.to/2ErIX4i.

Lisa Forman Neall writes, “We are sad that we will be missing reconnecting with old friends and their various spouses for our 50th but glad for the reason—a long planned adventure to Alaska with what I assure you is my last (and best!!) husband in a big old truck with a dog in tow (we’ll probably let her ride in the truck rather than tow her...). It took forever to find the right person to mind the farm and critters (horses, donkeys, goats, geese, cats, older dogs, chickens, Blueberry Toad Rainbow Fish, the grandkid named Betta and Shirley, the South American redfoot tortoise) for up to four months. Two years ago stars aligned from late April/early May through August 2019, and we’ve been working towards it ever since. When the reunion changed from September to May we knew we’d have to be MIA. Raise a glass for me and happy reuniting! Sorry to miss you, but, if we don’t get ‘et by bars,’ we’ll catch you another time.”

Lisa Forman Neall and her husband George in Iceland.

1974

Erica Henner Max writes, “Seven years ago, my husband Jeff talked me into adding another dog to our existing pack of three dogs. So a male Berger Picard puppy joined our family. The Berger Picard is a French sheepdog that was nearly extinct after World War II and has been brought back, so now there are approximately 4,000 worldwide. A friend of mine who is a professional show dog handler convinced me that we should show him, and that started us on a journey that continues today. In addition to that dog, CH Allstars Gregory Peck (Garçon) CM IT FDC, we have his daughter, GCH CH Mignonette de la Vie en Rose (Mimi) IT FDC, and her daughter, Ondine Des Montagnes (Ohnich). Dog showing has led to dog breeding (we are expecting a litter at the end of March), and I am now the show handler of my dogs. We travel around the country spending time with people that actually are just like one of the best movies of all time, Best in Show. I’m not exactly sure which character I am. At this point we have avoided going to New York for Westminster because my Colorado ranch dogs may not enjoy Manhattan in February, but we may consider it next year. So if any FWP people happen to be near a dog show, look out for us!”

1977

Jill Chukerman Test returned to the Saint Sebastian Players stage this past spring as Gingy in Love, Loss and What I Wore by Nora Ephron and Delia Ephron, based on a book by Ilene Beckerman. She writes, “While typical productions of this play usually have women (often celebrities) reading from the script on stools facing the audience, our fully staged production, set in a vintage consignment store, featured more interaction and visual interest. I had a lot of fun—and thanks to a bunch of Parker alumni and parents who supported us!”
1978

**Chris Bensinger** writes, “My wife Kelbe and I are lucky to have our kids back in Los Angeles. Ellie is getting some nice television acting parts, and Jack is producing sports at FOX network. I am writing a novel, acting, producing and teaching theatre. I am visiting my parents and in-laws, who are in their 80s and 90s, and playing lots of tennis and golf. My three years at Parker continue to pay dividends. I stay in touch with many of my classmates and always think fondly of the school on Webster and Clark.”

**Tom “Wambo” Campbell** writes, “After 34 years in the classroom (the first three at FWP), I have stepped across the divide and taken on a largely administrative role at Waynflete School in Portland, Maine. Waynflete was founded in 1898 as ‘the Women’s Finishing School of Portland’ for all the sea captains’ daughters. It went coed in 1972 and is currently the number one ranked school in Maine. While I am still teaching two math classes, I am now the Dean of Educational Operations, making sure the logistics are attended to and the schedule works, among many other things. It has been a steep learning curve, and so far I am really enjoying it. Lori and I still live in Portland and enjoy dropping down to Boston every couple of months to see Tracy and Tony Weisman. Looking forward to a visit from Sallie and Marc Elman this summer!”

1979

**Kim MacDonald Butler** writes, “I just finished an unsuccessful run for Wisconsin State Assembly in my rural, western district, which is largely Republican. It was a great experience and I learned a lot. I am proud of the clean, honest campaign I ran, and apparently I was enough of a threat to merit nasty ads and mailers from the Wisconsin GOP calling me a ‘Wacky Socialist.’ Since my husband and I own a small business, I find this amusing and puzzling. I am currently working part-time as an in-district representative for my State Senator and just got elected for my third term as Chair of the Polk County Democratic Party. My son is a freshman at University of Chicago, and I look forward to spending more time visiting him and the city. My daughter will be graduating this May and hopes to attend University of Wisconsin-Madison. I enjoy figuring out the next chapter in my life now that my kids are moving into adulthood, and I hope to compare notes with everyone at Reunion this May. I am also busy leading the reunion committee for my 35th reunion cluster at Grinnell College later in May.”

**Gary Silverman** opened a Chicago office for global law firm White & Case where he is a partner in their M&A/Private Equity practice. He lives in Chicago with his wife, Louise Monger.
1986

Emily Singer Lucio ran for office last fall and won. She was elected Area Neighborhood Commissioner (5A03) in Washington, DC.

1988

Luke Carroll writes, “Dan Freed and I used to joke in our senior year of high school about ever having anything to send in for class notes. Now is the time. I asked myself, ‘What can I do?’ The answer was open a studio, create Youlysses Incorporated and draw, paint and make sculptures. To share these with the Parker community, I created an Instagram account called Youlysses Incorporated, which features drawings, paintings, sculptures and electric drawings. Last summer I received a profile in Classic Chicago Magazine by Judy Bross, ‘Luke Carroll: Surrounded by Beauty,’ which kindly discussed my work at our family business, Green Incorporated, and shows some artwork. I still talk with Dan Freed, who is a great writer and takes great Instagram photos, and Joel Lederer ’89, who makes amazing theories of art and culture. I go out and travel with the lovely Norena Mikicic ’90, who takes beautiful photos. I look forward to hosting a show of work in the fall and continue to play and record music, recently attending the Parker memorial dedication of an electric piano in the name of Eli Miller ’90. The friendships and Parker community, past and present (including Edward Gorey ’42), still inspire and inform my life.”

Luke Carroll (L) and Dan Freed as “lords a-leaping” in 1987’s “12 Days of Christmas.”


1995

Elizabeth Harding and husband Kevin O’Reilly, a Latin alumnus, welcomed Simon Lewis O’Reilly, born 2/13/19, 7 lbs., 19 inches. He joins big brother Lucas A. O’Reilly, age five. She writes, “We are thrilled and delighted to have him here.”
Kelwin Harris was selected to participate in the U.S.-Mexico Leaders Initiative in Mexico City with the Center for American Progress (CAP). The program convenes emerging leaders from across a wide spectrum in both countries—introducing a new generation of leaders to regional and foreign policy issues. By drawing nominated candidates, CAP’s Mexico Team provides a five-day program, allowing participants to engage with government, private sector, media and civil society actors working on the bi-national relationship and invites young leaders to take their experience back to their communities to champion the importance of the U.S.-Mexico relationship.

Jon Landan just finished his first real estate project, The Synagogue at 5029 North Kenmore. It is the first of many that he will be doing with the Chicago real estate company FLATS Chicago.

1996
Regan Hall (L) met up with Kim Johnson ’95, James H. Lowry ’57 and Kelwin Harris ’95 in Chicago this past summer.

2004
Kori Schulman married Paul Kendrick on October 28, 2017 in Chicago and 17 Parker alumni attended the wedding.

2012

Noah Mintz just started a French Ph.D. program at Columbia and has released his first publication, a translation of a work by a creative writing teacher he had during a study abroad experience in Paris. Visit catranslation.org/shop/journal/two-lines-29/ to view the journal in which his translation of an excerpt of the novel A l’Arrache appears.


2018

Natalie Braye and Liliana Bravo made a film last spring for Parker’s Creating Historical Documentaries class, which is now an official selection of the Chicago International Film Festival’s 2019 CineYouth Film Festival. Pilsen: Not for Sale is about the changing identity of Chicago’s historic Pilsen neighborhood, amidst gentrification, as told through the eyes of Pilsen’s historic murals. Both filmmakers were back in Chicago for the premiere at Chicago’s historic Music Box Theatre on April 28.

In Memoriam

William Marshall ’44 passed away this past December. He cherished his time at FWP, according to daughter Susan Marshall Bleser, and visited Parker on his 90th birthday trolley tour in August 2017. According to an online obituary, "Our Dad took life as it came. By example, he taught his children fairness and social justice before it was called by that name. He taught the value of hard work, holding down two jobs for most of his life. He was proud of his Scottish heritage, and enjoyed wearing the Marshall clan colors. He was happiest dancing to Big Band music in a nightclub, or doing anything in the outdoors.

“Bill was born in Chicago on August 4, 1927. He and his brother lost their father when Bill was two, and his brother still an infant. A regular visitor as a young boy to Jane Addams’ Hull-House, he was among the first children to attend Viola Spolin’s drama improvisation classes there, thanks to his friendship with her son, Paul Sills, who later would found The Second City improvisational theater troupe. Despite his family’s poverty, and with Spolin’s help, the course of Bill’s life was changed when he was accepted on academic scholarship to Chicago’s Francis W. Parker School where he earned top grades, played varsity football, was on the swim team, and made lifelong friendships. Early graduation led to Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, where he played varsity football for three years, and was team captain in 1945. He played one season of lacrosse. A music lover, he sang with the Kenyon choir. He left Kenyon to serve a year in the Army stateside, in part tending to German prisoners of war at Fort Sheridan in Highwood, Ill. He returned to Kenyon for his senior year and graduated in 1948 with a degree in psychology.
“Work with Donnelley Publishing (The Yellow Pages) followed, then medical school, where his effort, Bill later said, was doomed due to the college chemistry classes he missed during wartime. He went on to work for the Chicago Welfare Department, where he met our beloved mother, the late Jane Little. They married in 1954 and raised three children before moving to Northbrook, where they settled into a home built as a farmhouse in 1896. Their fourth child was born in 1965. Bill held a sales position at Sonneborn/Witco Chemical Corporation for 35 years, until retirement in 1992. Bill was an early adopter of green practices when he launched Antique Barns & Beams, a firm that re-repurposed siding and timbers from historic hand-built barns for many Midwest restaurants, architects and designers. Dad shoveled his own snow and raked his own leaves. He was a hands-on grandfather to nine grandchildren. He volunteered as an ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher to immigrants and Lake County (Illinois) Jail inmates.”

Charles Maryan ’52 “was already deeply involved in theatre and drama, his first and lifelong love,” when he arrived at Parker in high school, according to classmate George Malko. After Dartmouth, he moved to New York to study at The Neighborhood Playhouse with “the legendary Sanford Meisner. He also worked with and then taught at Stella Adler’s equally legendary studio.

“Chuck’s work ranged from directing small workshops and showcases (he directed a lot of my theatrical work, and did so brilliantly) to large-scale theater productions and newly composed and modern operas. He coached soap opera actors and actresses—daytime drama, in their parlance—and taught, which he never stopped doing at various levels. He even ran his own playwriting workshop where, over the years, he developed many writers. At the time of his death, Chuck was working on several projects, including an original opera, its libretto written by the wonderful, often-performed American playwright David Johnston, the music by the equally wonderful and widely performed American composer Drew Hemenger.

“People in the arts don’t retire, they work and keep working. Chuck was busier than ever. And then he died and the work stopped with that cruel abruptness of something precious ripped away from us. It is everyone’s loss and we are angry, and we are grateful that he had been part of our lives.”

According to classmate Pat Eldredge, there is information about his career as a director in New York, London and across this country at charlesmaryan.com. “He and I were co-heads of the Theater Club at Parker, and he will always be remembered by our class for his rendition of the Lord Chancellor in Gilbert & Sullivan’s Iolanthe. He is sorely missed.”
Ken Marks ’50 is remembered by his children—Kristin ’82, Peter ’85 and Tim ’86—as a “wonderful and amazing father, husband and grandfather... We miss him so much. …we hope to have a bigger memorial sometime over the summer. Kenny would hate for us to be sad, so this summer we hope to be able to celebrate with all of you the glory and joy that was Kenny and the infinite delights of the time we were all blessed to share with him. Thank you for all your love and support during this terrible time. We feel so well cared for and connected to all of you. We look forward to sharing stories, songs and memories with everyone at the event this summer, and we will keep you posted about dates and details as our plans solidify.”

Bill Rattner ’54, according to classmate Dorothy Ramm, “joined our class in 11th grade; I believe he attended U. of C. High which didn’t at that time go beyond 10th grade. I believe Bill was a lawyer but I’m not certain. He and his wife were interested in opera and I saw them once at a pre-opera lecture.” An obituary contained this information: “Bill was born September 26, 1936 in Chicago. He was raised in South Shore and graduated from the University of Chicago Lab School and Francis W. Parker. Received his undergraduate degree from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and his JD from Harvard Law School. Practiced corporate litigation for 37 years. Upon retirement, Bill served for 14 years as the Executive Director of The Lawyers for the Creative Arts. He served as an Adjunct Professor at Northwestern University School of Law; Columbia College Chicago; and the Graham School of Continuing Studies at the University of Chicago. He served as Chairman of the City of Evanston Board of Ethics; as the President of the Chicago Chapter of the American Jewish Committee; as Trustee of the Evanston Arts Center; and a Board Member of Park National Bank. As a member of the Catholic-Jewish Dialogue, he travelled to Israel on a delegation with Cardinal Joseph Bernardin to foster Catholic-Jewish relations. His passions included a love for all music, especially opera; acting in Evanston’s Upstagers theater group; and a fascination with the Arctic including going on two dog sled exhibitions. He was an insatiable learner, a voracious reader, and a perpetual student of history. He had a serious crush on Queen Elizabeth II and amassed a large collection of Royal Family memorabilia. His caustic humor and warm compassion will be deeply missed.”

Bryan Beham ’93, according to Marty Morris ’94, attended Parker for his freshman and sophomore years.
A Fond Farewell

At the end of the 2018–19 school year, Parker celebrated two retiring faculty members, who spent a combined 75 years at the school, at a special Morning Ex and a reception for former faculty, parents emeriti and alumni to reconnect with these longtime educators. The Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, parents and students are grateful for their immeasurable contributions to the Parker educational experience and our community.

Bonnie Seebold
Upper School English teacher
Taught at Parker for 41 years

Patrick McHale
Physical Education teacher, all divisions
Parent emeritus, grandparent
Taught at Parker for 34 years