Message from the Director

Brigitte Bertschi

With fall in the air, I am once again filled with excitement and fresh ambition. The faculty has returned with new ideas for curriculum development and carefully planned implementation steps. The classrooms are spruced up and ready. There's laughter filling the campus, great parent support at school and behind the scenes, and the whole staff is committed and ready for another promising year at Bertschi School. New beginnings are rejuvenating and inspiring for all of us, and this year will mark another significant benchmark for Bertschi School as we launch in earnest our development plans for the Reid Court property. We are delighted to be working with the Seattle architectural firm Miller/Hull, who is moving ahead with the conceptual design for the new facilities.

On the subject of development, I'd like to share some thoughts on child development from my summer reading of the Educational Leadership Edition. Of particular interest was "The Importance of Play", an article by Elena Bodrova, a research fellow for the National Institute for Early Education Research, and Deborah J. Leong, a professor of psychology at Metropolitan State College of Denver. The article develops five themes: effects of play on learning and development, how play evolves, characteristics of mature play, how teachers can support imaginary play, and the positive effects of mature play.

Play is of great interest to scholars of child development and learning, to educators and psychologists. Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky were among the first to link play with cognitive development. Research has shown that play contributes to advances in "verbalization, vocabulary, language comprehension, attention span, imagination, concentration, impulse control, curiosity, problem solving strategies, cooperation, empathy and group participation." Recent research adds evidence that there are strong connections between the quality of play among Pre-K and Kindergarten children and their ability to master literacy and other academic content.

Play, including make believe play, emerges gradually as the child grows from infancy to Pre-K/K age. At first children are more interested in actual objects, and later focus more on how people use those objects in social interaction. For example, the toddler enjoys continually hugging and rocking a bear. Later the

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Welcome to our new trustees

Julie Barwick

Julie Barwick is a full-time mother of three children at Bertschi: Cam (5th), Carly (3rd) and Megan (1st). She brings professional experience in management, critical analysis, sales and marketing. In addition to her service on Bertschi’s Board of Trustees, Julie also served on the Board at Crown Hill Cooperative Preschool for two years. Julie has a host of other related community service experiences from managing her children’s sports teams to neighborhood fundraising. At Bertschi, Julie has been an integral part of the Parent Council, having served as Class Coordinator, Vice President and, most recently, President. Julie also served on the Strategic Planning Committee.

Emily Heston

Emily Heston is a full-time mother of two children. Her son, Loomis, is in 4th grade at Bertschi. Her career has focused on public relations, events planning, and product development. Emily was formerly employed by Starbucks as a food and beverage product manager. As a member of the Eleanor Henry Reed Guild (Children’s Hospital) for the past 12 years, Emily has served in various leadership positions, including president. She has also been actively involved in the Henry Art Gallery Gala and Seattle Emergency Housing. For the past eight years, Emily has been a committed volunteer at both of her children’s schools.

Anna Marie Laurence

Anna Marie’s daughter Julia is a third grader at Bertschi, and son Jack graduated from Bertschi in 2002. An attorney by profession, Anna Marie is currently devoting her time to Bertschi and other volunteer activities while a full-time mother. She has served on a number of non-profit boards, including the Program Committee, Executive Committee and Board of Governors of the Jackson Foundation and the Jack and Colleen Ryan Guild at Children’s Hospital and Medical Center. She is on the Emeritus Board of PEPS (Program for Early Parent Support), having served as President of that organization. Anna Marie sits on the Board as President of the Bertschi Parent Council. She has been actively involved at Bertschi for a number of years, holding the offices of Secretary-Treasurer and Vice President on the BPC prior to becoming President.

Udo Reich

Udo Reich is the father of first-grader Lena and three-year-old daughter Vera at home. He is the President of Ambiente Tile, and Managing Member of Panescu Properties LLC. Udo has expertise in property development, construction project management, business management, design, and 22 years of construction experience in Europe and the U.S. As founder and current member, Udo has
Odo has been actively involved in his condominium association for the past 5 years. He is also a current member of the Blue Ridge Board of Directors, where over the past two years, he has served as Architectural and Landscape chair. Last year Odo served on the Facilities Committee at Bertschi. Odo’s related community service experience includes over ten years of coaching and refereeing children’s team sports in Germany.

John Sage

John Sage is the father of Jackson (1st) and Nicholas (Kindergarten). He is the President and Co-Founder of Pura Vida Coffee. John’s professional experience includes marketing, public speaking and large group presentations, strategic planning, leadership of for-profit and non-profit teams, entrepreneurial management, and technology development. John has been a board member of the Northwest AIDS Foundation (now Northwest AIDS Alliance) for six years, where he was chair of the Marketing and the New Ventures Committees. For the past 12 years, John has served on the extended Board of Governors for Opportunity International, an international development/microcredit organization. John is active in his church, involved with alumni groups for both Stanford and Harvard, and participates in Cub Scouts with his son.

David Thyer

David is the father of Guy (5th grade) as well as Estelle (Bertschi ’02 graduate) and 3-year old Frances. David is Vice-President of Operations at R. C. Hedreen, an area real estate development firm. In addition to his knowledge of property development, David’s background includes experience in hotel management, venture capital, asset management and coordination of architects and consultants. David has served on and is currently chair of the Facilities Committee at Bertschi. David is an enthusiastic ocean sailor and has competed in ocean races such as the “Sydney to Hobart” and “Victoria to Maui” as well as other West Coast and Northwest races. He enjoys salmon fishing locally and in northern waters as well as fly-fishing. A keen golfer, David plays regularly with his son Guy, who is coming quite close to beating him.

With gratitude to our departing trustees

Kevin Callaghan

Kevin leaves the board having served in a variety of capacities, most recently as President and Co-President. He chaired the Finance Committee, sat on the Committee on Trustees, co-chaired the 5-year Strategic Plan Committee, and served as Vice President during his board tenure. Kevin’s sons Max and Jack (Bertschi ’03) both attended Bertschi.

Ellen Evans

Ellen has two Bertschi graduates – Lilah ’00 and Daniel ’03. Ellen was Chair of the Finance Committee, and served as Treasurer and Secretary of the Executive Committee.

Ron Hosogi

Ron served as a trustee for nine years. During that time he co-chaired the 5-Year Strategic Plan Committee and chaired both the Finance Committee and the Committee on Trustees. He also served as Vice-President and President of the Board, as well as a member of Finance and Technology Committees. Ron’s daughters Renee ’00 and Michelle ’03 are both Bertschi graduates.

Mary Ellen Hudgins

Mary Ellen’s daughter Alexandra graduated from Bertschi in 1995. As a trustee, Mary Ellen served on the Development Committee and the Committee on Trustees, and was Secretary of the Executive Committee.

Ed Liebow

A trustee for four years, Ed served as the Communication and Outreach Ambassador. He also co-chaired the Diversity Committee. His daughter Nabina was in the Bertschi class of 2000.
5th Graders are on their way!

Thirty-one beaming fifth graders received their certificates in June, following an exciting final year at Bertschi. Highlights of the year included “The Island Project”; an exploration of civil rights issues and the challenges inherent in leadership; a study of immigration and their own family’s ancestry; building robots through the Mars Exploration Rover project; and production of their class play which they wrote. While it’s always difficult to leave friends behind, the students are well-prepared and excited for the challenges that middle school will bring.

Bertschi School Class of 2003

Nick Bolyaev
Marco Benvenuto
Maggie Beton
Nina Breen
Karina Brennan
Michael Brennan
Jack Callaghan
Anya Cohen
Morgan Corner
Grace Covill-Grennan
Nailah Dodd
Max Geiduschek
Gina Ginberg
Nina Hartman
Charlie Hodgman
Michelle Hosogi
Robby Janeway Wright
Erica Lieppman
Eya Masler
Daniel Melzer
Leslie Millman
Scott Millman
Kelly Nuckleston
Jack Newton
Bunnie Raub
Ben Stuart
Chris Van Dusen
Reid Walker
Peter Wells
Bailey Willis
Emmy Wyckoff

Bertschi 5th graders headed to a number of schools, including:

Bush School
Eckstein Middle School
Evergreen School
Forest Ridge School
Lakeside School
Northwest School
Seattle Academy of Arts and Science
Seattle Girls’ School
University Prep

Admission Update

Bertschi had a busy and successful admission season, with more than 330 families inquiring about our program and 158 submitting applications for admission. Reviewing applicants’ files and determining for which children Bertschi is the best fit is always a difficult process. We have many more wonderful students apply than we have openings for.

We welcomed 29 new families to our community: 18 kindergartners (along with 14 siblings!), one student in 1st, six in 3rd grade and two students in both 4th and 5th. Total enrollment at the school when we opened our doors in September was 202 – there is plenty of energy in our classrooms and on the playground!

Soon we will begin helping our 5th grade families through the middle school application process. Beginning with the Middle School Forum in October through the notification letters from desired schools in April, we make every effort to help place our students in schools where they will continue to flourish. Middle school administrators consistently report that Bertschi graduates are prepared academically as well as socially and emotionally and make a smooth transition to the middle school environment.

A big thanks goes to our teachers, staff and parents for all of their hard work during the admission season. Bertschi teachers and staff opened our classrooms to visitors, wrote recommendations for current families, visited with prospective families – the list goes on. Parents helped with the Open House and volunteered to be host families, extending a warm welcome to new families. Acquainting prospective families with Bertschi is truly a community effort – a wonderful representation of what we are all about.
Learning Services’ Donna Mell Motivates with Enrichment

Bertschi is a school based on diversity. This includes a diversity of learning styles, strengths and abilities – a true community of learners. Bertschi strives to provide the resources and support needed to facilitate educational success for all our students, whether they are experiencing difficulties or exceeding grade level expectations.

Launched three years ago, Learning Services (formerly Learning Skills Program) works in partnership with the teaching staff, administration and parents to identify and assess students with specialized learning needs. This year Bertschi is expanding program resources to increase our focus on challenging students with advanced academic strengths.

Children can demonstrate their advanced abilities in a variety of areas. The US Office of Education has identified the following ability domains:

- Intellectual – a love of learning, thinking in analogies, problem finding, strong concentration and memory skills
- Specific Academic – an intense focused interest and skill set, need to achieve, self criticism
- Creative/Productive – flexibility, risk-taking, tolerance for ambiguity, individual structuring
- Psychosocial/Leadership – backwards planning, social cognition, emotional stability, need to achieve
- Visual/Performing Arts – an intense, focused concentration on art form, cognitive verbal, visual matching

While a student may exhibit strengths in one or more of these areas, he or she can at the same time experience significant challenges in others. Similarly, when subject mastery comes easily for a child, he or she may not develop the emotional skills needed to work hard and persevere when tackling more difficult tasks. Identifying these areas of strength and challenge early is crucial to promoting academic achievement for students.

Donna Mell, Learning Services Specialist, has worked within a number of academically advanced programs in area schools. She has certification in special education (grades K-8), and experience working with elementary students across the spectrum of learning abilities. She will lead the effort at Bertschi to develop additional resources and curriculum for academically advanced students. In the coming months Donna will examine effective program models and objectives, assess the strategies currently in place, and develop a plan to expand our abilities to work with students in their areas of strength.

Donna is already spearheading a number of efforts in this area. She will be forming an Odyssey of the Mind team at Bertschi. A nationally recognized program, Odyssey of the Mind teaches students to learn creative problem-solving methods while having fun in the process. Students are encouraged to think divergently by exploring open-ended problems that appeal to a wide range of interests. Categories include mechanical/vehicle, classics, performance, structure and technical performance. (For more information on this program go to www.odysseyofthemind.com)

During the course of the year Donna and Laura White, Learning Services Director, will provide information, strategies and curriculum ideas for teachers to integrate within their classrooms where appropriate. These might include reading groups, math centers, assessment tools and other approaches to learning. Developing and tailoring curriculum to respond to multiple learning styles is an ongoing process that is both challenging and exciting. Bertschi is fortunate to have faculty and staff who are committed to making

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Spring Arts Showcase 2003

Parents and children packed the North Playfield to enjoy the musical performances during Bertschi School’s annual Spring Arts Showcase—Many Voices, Many Views. After the grand finale, a rousing three-part version of “Take Me Out to the Ball Game,” families toured the myriad of art projects on display throughout the classrooms, hallways, and even spilling out onto the breezeway and playground.
Summer Exploration
Summer Explorers from Bertschi and many other schools enjoyed the sunny skies and a variety of exciting camps, from Harry Potter to Basketball to Spanish Immersion. This year's program offered half and full day camps, as well as Extended Day before and after camp hours.
Campus Update

Exciting things are happening at Bertschi! In January Bertschi entered into an agreement to purchase the house directly adjacent to the administration building, owned by the Hooper family, taking possession in January 2005. This acquisition, coupled with the purchase of the Reid Court apartment complex a year ago, will allow the school to proceed with plans to add much-needed space to the current campus for the arts, physical education, outdoor play, community gatherings and parking. In addition, Bertschi will finally be able re-instate the Pre-Kindergarten program.

In June, the Facilities Committee selected Miller/Hull, a respected Seattle architectural firm, to go forward with drafting the conceptual design and schematic drawings for the development of this additional property. Miller/Hull has designed a variety of projects locally, including the new gymnasium at Seattle Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Fisher Pavilion at the Seattle Center. David Miller and Bob Hull are well known for their sense of social responsibility and commitment to the environment, and their work emphasizes the expressive potential of ordinary construction rather than highly crafted, high-cost details.

We recently asked Bob Hull to share some of his thoughts about the project at Bertschi.

How do you begin designing a project like this? Where do you get your initial ideas?

We were of course ecstatic when we learned we were selected to help design your future. Bertschi is one of the most prominent private schools in the city, not in terms of size but in its teaching approach. Having a highly visible site on Capitol Hill doesn't hurt either.

One of our initial ideas developed from some things we heard when we were talking to Brigitte and others. One is that different age groups help each other — you call it the buddy system. Rather than having the class levels separated, Bertschi wants to mix them together. The other is that parents are encouraged to come into the school to meet teachers and to pick up their kids at the end of the day. From this came the idea of the "fish ladder". The "fish ladder" is the conceptual device that will tie together all of Bertschi's buildings. We envision it as a continuous exterior "street" within the campus that ramps up while providing eddies for sitting and meeting and will be used by students and parents. Brigitte mentioned that it would be nice to create a protected covered space that parents can use while waiting, which will offer a chance for interaction and information sharing.

What does it mean to you as the most challenging and/or most exciting aspect of this project for Bertschi?

Now that Bertschi will own the entire block, this is the time to look at the school's image from the outside, particularly from 10th Avenue East. The church steeple on the north end of the block has always been an icon. We feel that the new commons/gym on the south side of the campus can bookend the site. This doesn't mean mimicking; it will be distinctively different. The outward expression of this new facility is a real opportunity to communicate with the neighbors and the Seattle community. The interior representation can make it a very special space.

Another challenge is to strengthen the expression of the front door to the school. This involves clarifying the drop off area and the cohesion of the landscaping along 10th.

What do you personally enjoy most about your work?

Exploration. I really enjoy digging into a project and having it talk back to me. I call this being "informed" by the project. In a way it's finding design opportunities that I didn't know were there at the beginning. They are truths that can be exploited and built upon. Every project has them. When you find them you're on your way to a good design.
Where are they now?

After graduating from Lakeside School in 2001, Lily Whitsitt (1988-1992) traveled to a small village in northern Thailand where she lived with a local family and taught English and art to grade school children. She then traveled to Italy and took intensive Italian in Florence. Last summer Lily was a counselor at Camp Orkila before heading off to Wesleyan this fall.

Lily's brother Sean Whitsitt (Pre-K 1991) is in the class of 2005 at Lakeside. An accomplished athlete, Sean plays varsity lacrosse, basketball and football. Last year Sean carried the ball 60 times for 419 yards and five TDs for Lakeside - the Seattle Times cited him as a player to watch this season.

Mark Middaugh (Bertschi '96) graduated from Lakeside in 2002. A freshman at Duke, he is running varsity track and averaging six-minute miles. (Mom writes “Not bad for a kid who started Bertschi at age 5 not knowing how to jump rope!”) Mark was recently chosen to serve on the Duke Senate - his committee assignments are athletics and parking violations. This summer he caught up with a Bertschi kindergarten classmate, Iben Falconer.

Molly Middaugh (Bertschi '98) is still singing in the Northwest Girlchoir, which she joined when she was a third grader at Bertschi. This summer she traveled to Italy with the choir, where she managed to understand Italian, thanks to her Spanish language study. She recently visited her Bertschi classmate Katie Beal, who moved to Chicago after second grade. The two have remained close friends over the years - Bertschi friendships truly last.

Chris Matthews (1975-1977) is a true alum, having attended Bertschi in its first and second years of operation. He is married and lives in St. Paul, Minnesota. He works at the corporate headquarters of Best Buy as Manager, Enterprise Research & Analysis. With a background in geographic information systems (GIS), Chris travels around the country to determine sites for new Best Buy stores. In his spare time he mountain bikes.

Rachel Green (1982-85) is thousands of miles away from Bertschi, studying in Moscow. She graduated from Garfield High School and then got her bachelor's degree in Russian history from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. She was an America Corps Volunteer in Seattle Public Schools before starting her PhD at the University of Chicago. Rachel’s dissertation is on Russian orphans who survived World War II. This is her seventh trip to Russia!

Jillian Gatcheco (1994-95) emails from the Phillipines that she is now in college studying Management and Communications Technology at the Ateneo de Manila University. She still keeps in touch with some of her Bertschi friends, even after eight years. She writes, “Bertschi has given me so many wonderful memories that will always remain treasured in my heart - thank you!”

Rachel Walker (Bertschi ’96) Rachel has been making waves since she left Bertschi. A 2003 graduate of Forest Ridge, she has been an active competitor with USA Swimming since the fifth grade. This fall Rachel entered Harvard University, and plans to continue swimming competitively there, devoting an average of 20 hours a week to practice. Go Rachel!

Enclosed is a postcard for you to share information about yourself or other Bertschi Alumni and their families. Please let us know what's new with you!
play will change, with the child acting out as the bear mom or dad, perhaps talking in baby bear language and tone. By the age of 4-5 they begin to develop more complex play with multiple roles and symbolic uses of props. Some children, the article points out, might still use the baby language in KG. This is identified with “the toddler level” and defined as immature play.

The article points out that teachers often have different opinions about what constitutes mature play. Some think it is more sophisticated play, such as playing an archeological dig that the children themselves have structured. Some think being able to play without getting into disagreements marks the transition to mature play. However, Bodrova and Leong define mature play very clearly: in mature play, children assign new meanings to objects and people in pretend situations. In these imaginary situations, children focus on abstract properties, rather than concrete attributes. They play different and multiple roles to support their characters. I often observe such play in our classrooms and playground, and marvel over the children’s intelligent, creative, and sophisticated interaction. For example “playing horses”, doesn’t simply mean horses running around galloping and whinnying.

Mature play goes far beyond that as children become horse keepers, trainers and riders, and the horses can think, feel, and talk. Crucial for emotional and social development, in mature play children learn to understand emotions and begin to develop emotional self-control. For example, a child will explain: “I am really OK but have to cry because I am playing a baby and the doctor just gave me a shot.”

In mature play, clear and defined rules are established by the play group and must be followed to stay in the play. Flexible themes allow new ideas to be incorporated and previously established roles to be changed. Children in mature play not only follow commands and ask for help, they also issue commands and offer help. By combining different themes the children learn to plan and solve problems. Their vocabulary and mastery of grammar develops as they use language to plan the play scenario, negotiate, act out their roles, explain their pretend roles, and switch between pretend and real situations.

When I visit with our children during play, I often observe that their play scenarios continue day after day, with play themes expanded and revised, and new children, sometimes quite a bit older, are brought into the action. Both Bodrova and Leong point out that staying with the same play theme for extended periods is an essential part of play as it allows children to elaborate on imaginary situations, integrate new roles and discover new props. The authors emphasize the value of fieldtrips and other enrichments to expand children’s repertoire of play themes and roles, and advance planning so the children can communicate about their roles. Children involved in the planning of their play tend to stay with it longer and are less easily distracted by other activities.

The article concludes that teachers who focus on supporting mature play achieve the best results. Not only do their students master literacy skills and academic concepts at a higher rate, they also develop better language and social skills and are better able to monitor their physical and cognitive behaviors. Where play is not made a priority, teachers often struggle with class management and lack of interest in reading and writing. Both Bodrova and Leong stress that “TV and computers, even with carefully selected educational content, cannot replace live mentors.”

At Bertschi we place great emphasis on the importance of thoughtful, supported play for children’s learning and development. On a daily basis, I’m able to observe the creative interaction of the children as they play, and the wonderful teaching moments such play provides. I’m privileged to see it on a daily basis, and it is always a joy.
the educational experience for our students is engaging, engaging and enjoyable.

Here are some suggestions for educational opportunities outside of school:

1. Provide advanced learning opportunities, in the specific area or areas in which your child’s talents and interests lie. This does not mean scheduling activities that fill up your child’s time week after week. Your child will gain more from focusing on one activity at a time, one that actually advances skill level and desire to know. If the activity is sedentary (piano, computer programming) you may want to add an activity that involves some physical skill.

2. Provide ways for your child to understand her/his own identity and uniqueness. You will need to carve out large blocks of time for your child to work alone or with you on the development of talents and interests. The two of you will need to find those “benchmarks of progress” either through private competitions, special competitions, mentors/tutors, periods of self-study or on-line instruction to move along the path to full talent development.

3. Provide opportunities for socialization with a mix of adults and children of varying abilities and ages. It is important to give all children the message that they are part of the human community and that they have a responsibility to that community. Participation in organizations and activities will give your child a chance to interact with others who focus on idealist concerns and a chance to see the positive side of human nature, for example: community clean-up, fund raising projects, food programs, scouts, and peer tutoring.

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**Faculty Spotlight**

**New Faces at Bertschi**

**Barb Clagett**

Stepping in for Emily Alsop (grade 5) who is away on sabbatical for the fall is Barb Clagett. Barb is by no means a newcomer to Bertschi. Barb was the main substitute teacher for the 5th grade last year—and her daughter Rachel attended Bertschi when the school was only three years old. With more than twenty years of teaching experience, her educational focus is on humanities and music. She sings, plays the piano and is a violist with the Philharmonia Northwest Chamber Orchestra. Barb has traveled extensively; her trips include a bicycle trip in China and a nine-month exploration of India, Nepal, Russia, Poland, Hungary, Turkey, Syria, Egypt and other neighboring countries. Barb has four grandchildren, three grandchildren—and now 16 eager 5th graders!

**Meritxell Ampurdanes**

There is a new face in the Spanish room! Meritxell was born and raised in Barcelona, Spain and earned her M. in journalism at Universitat Ramon. Prior to coming to Seattle she taught English in Barcelona, and worked as a journalist and producer for National Public Radio. Fluent in both Catalan and Spanish, Meritxell taught Spanish last year at the Seattle Girls School. She enjoys spending time outdoors, as well as cooking for her friends—dinners at her home can go on for hours! Meritxell looks forward to having lots of fun with her 4th and 5th grade students at Bertschi while sharpening their Spanish language skills and developing their appreciation for other cultures.

**Ryota Akamine**

Ryota can be seen all over the Bertschi campus. He is assisting in Anne’s kindergarten class in the mornings, monitoring lunch at the noon hour, and working with kids in Extended Day after school. Ryota has extensive experience as a Chemical Dependency Specialist, working at the Ryther Child Center and Center for Human Services. He earned his B.A. in Sociology at the University of Washington, and completed the Chemical Dependency Program at Shoreline Community College. Outside of school Ryota often can be found hiking, fishing and going to movies—except in late December when he is going to Hawaii!
reminders

Back to School Night
Thursday, October 2, 7:00-8:30 pm

Jump for Joy
October 6 - December 16

New Family Welcome Dinner
Tuesday, October 14, 6:00-8:00 pm

Middle School Forum
Wednesday, October 15, 7:00-8:30 pm

Parent Education Evening with Gary Benton
“How Boys and Girls Learn Differently”
Wednesday, October 22, 7:00-8:30 pm

Parents’ Night Out
Saturday, November 15, 7:00 pm

Grandparents and Special Friends Day
Tuesday, November 25

Admission Open House
Thursday, January 22, 7:00-8:30 pm

Technology Immersion Night
Wednesday, January 28, 7:00-8:30 pm

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Bertschi News is a production of the Bertschi School
Office of Development and School Relations.

Tracy Nordhoff, Director of Admission and School Relations
Pam Lauritzen, Coordinator for Development and Communications
Laura Croft, Editing
photography by
Philip Newton, David Chow, Rachel Cumbow and Pam Lauritzen

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