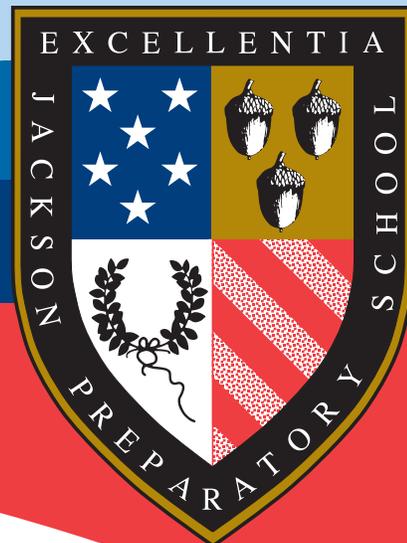


PrepNotes

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER OF JACKSON PREPARATORY SCHOOL



from the head of school

by Susan Lindsay, Head of School



In recent days, I have read and listened to many conversations focused on the concept of courage. Swiss theologian Karl Barth states, “**Courage is fear that has said its prayers.**” In a recent Great Leaders Seminar at Prep, high school students heard Dr. Robert Khayat discuss the need for leaders to have courage and the physical and/or emotional energy

to implement change within our community.

With these readings and conversations reverberating in my mind—coupled with the excitement of the holiday seasons of Thanksgiving, Christmas and the coming New Year—I pause to reflect on the many blessings that are ours to claim and the obligations that we (who are blessed beyond measure) are charged with during this season and always. I trust that you will have the courage to:

- Address estrangements or alienations within your family
- Be willing to sacrifice for the greater good within the community
- Stand for what is right and honorable—even when it is difficult
- Understand that others may have different solutions to address an issue
- Know that seldom is a problem solved through inaction

I am so thankful for the courageous “can-do” attitude within the Prep community, and I wish the very best for each of you and your families during the holidays.

“The Lord has told you what is good. He has told you what he wants from you: do what is right to other people; love being kind to others; and live humbly, trusting your God.” ~Micah 6:8

board of trustees

by Dudley Wooley, President



You may recall that during my Back to School Night comments I promised, “**We will be more intentional this year in asking for your support.**” True to my word, I wanted to take a few minutes and do just that.

Did you know that Prep’s tuition covers only 92% of our annual Operating Budget? Truthfully, this is very common among independent secondary schools and colleges/universities. In fact, our 2008-09 audited financials show that our cost per student at Prep is \$10,970, as compared to the net revenue per student we realize of only \$9,986. You don’t have to be a student in Dave Ollar’s math class to figure out that this equals a shortfall!

Every year, we must make up the difference with

donations through the Annual Fund (now called the Patriot Club). Historically, only 35% of our parents have given to the Annual Fund. Our goal is 100%! So, why give? First, your contribution is tax deductible. Second, an undesignated Patriot Club gift gives Prep the most flexibility to address our most immediate needs that the operating budget cannot cover. Third, **your additional support sends an affirming message to all the faculty/staff that you are invested and committed to the school.** (By the way, our faculty/staff historically have 100% participation.) Last, it is a great investment in our children. When I consider what I may spend on my children each year for their enjoyment and pleasure, it is easier to justify another contribution to Prep knowing that their lives will be forever blessed and enriched by the men and women who lead them and the many opportunities they have at the school.



student life

junior high and senior high

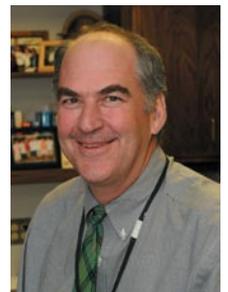
by Trudy Powers, Head of Junior High, and Dr. Luke Nealey, Assistant Head/Head of Senior High



As administrators, we want to express our appreciation for the outstanding teachers we have at Jackson Prep in both the junior high and senior high. Prep's teachers are hard-working, intelligent professionals who are dedicated to their students. Our teachers take their students seriously—always encouraging them to rise to the challenge and perform every task to the best of their ability. It is vitally important to them that each student becomes progressively more self-directed and self-reliant in handling academic challenges. *As they seek to maximize their students' natural gifts and talents in various ways, many of our teachers will go the extra mile, offering help outside of class to students who request it.*

Teachers are fully aware that accomplishment is the foundation of a student's self-esteem, and that to lower their standards or expectations is rarely beneficial for any student. A teacher's greatest challenge, perhaps, is to consciously push a student out of his or her comfort zone to broaden horizons and think about new possibilities. Teachers often promote learning simply for the love of learning, and not just for grades. A teacher's involvement in the classroom as an instructor is only part of the complex role he or she may play. Additionally, a teacher may serve as a student's mentor, counselor, encourager, disciplinarian, or friend. *Whatever the case, the classroom teacher can have a tremendous influence on a student.* The Prep students know that the teachers genuinely care about their progress, and this alone can motivate students to perform.

The teaching mission can be challenging and complex, yet so vital in the life of a student. A teacher can never claim his "work is done," because there is no endpoint in what he or she can do for students. Jackson Prep is fortunate to have exceptional teachers on staff who are totally dedicated to their students and to their teaching mission.



challenge

counseling

by Jeanne Marie Peet, Director of College Counseling



The most important year of high school is whatever year a student is in! Beginning in ninth grade, each year lays the foundation for academic successes in subsequent years. The freshman year (and in many instances, the eighth grade year) begins coursework that sets the stage for possible selection to future AP courses, expands community service opportunities, and allows for exploration of extracurricular activities. Grades earned in ninth grade courses are the initial components of a student's GPA. Unfortunately, courses and grades are two aspects of the college application that cannot be altered once they are completed. Colleges will be looking not only at the grades earned, but also at the rigor of the curriculum as the context for those grades. **Colleges are seeking students who love to learn and whose passion takes them to the highest level of challenge.** These students continue to stretch themselves academically across all disciplines during their high school years by taking rigorous courses all four years.

Sophomores, while continuing to maintain high academics, should explore activities available at Prep and in the community, seeking activities they enjoy and in which they would like to make deeper commitments to service and leadership. **Summer opportunities, such as workshops, college programs, employment, camps, and travel abroad can broaden and enrich the high school experience and are encouraged for all students.** These experiences also provide excellent opportunities for student reflection and expression in the college essays that will be written in the senior year.

The junior year is spent primarily in preparing for and taking the standardized tests that have become an integral part of college applications, but this is not the time to slack off in terms of curriculum and leadership opportunities. AP Courses and continuation of world languages should be given strong priority when selecting courses for the junior and senior years. Students should show initiative in the further development of their service projects.

If one compares the high school experience to a one-mile race, the senior year is the fourth and final lap in which students sprint to the finish. Coasting at this point could have serious consequences in admission and scholarship competitions. **If the first three years have set the stage for a strong academic profile the senior year, students will be able to maximize their strengths and set themselves apart from other bright students when submitting their applications.** It's not unusual for Prep students and parents to express concerns about varying levels of difficulty among high schools, but admission officers are pretty savvy in assessing the strength and breadth of academic programs in schools. Before a transcript is evaluated, admission officers review the scholastic profile sent with the transcript which shows curriculum, testing performance of recent graduates, college matriculations, and other important data that reflects the quality of the high school. They are able to make distinctions between high-achieving candidates from very different schools. Prep has established a strong reputation in the state, region and nation that enhances student success in admissions and scholarship selection.

Academics and appropriate course selection should be a high priority from ninth grade onward in order for a student to be performing at an optimum level when the senior year arrives. The real competition for college admission and scholarship begins a long time before any applications are submitted. Every year is important in the process.



Leadership

new mentoring program

by Cindy Townsend, Director of Global Leadership Institute

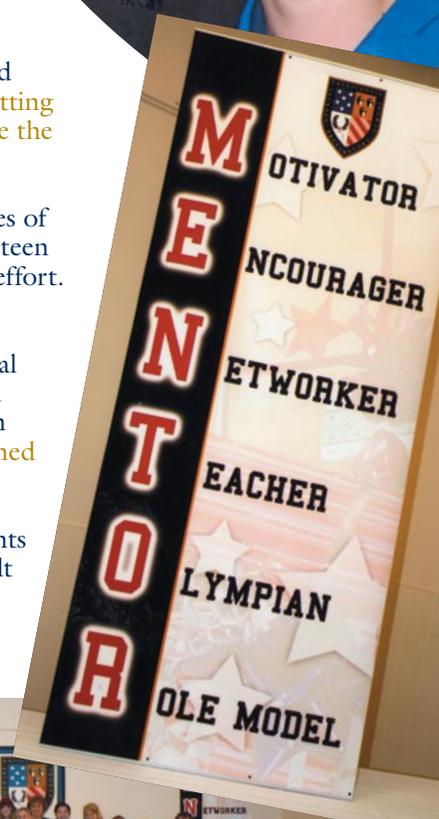
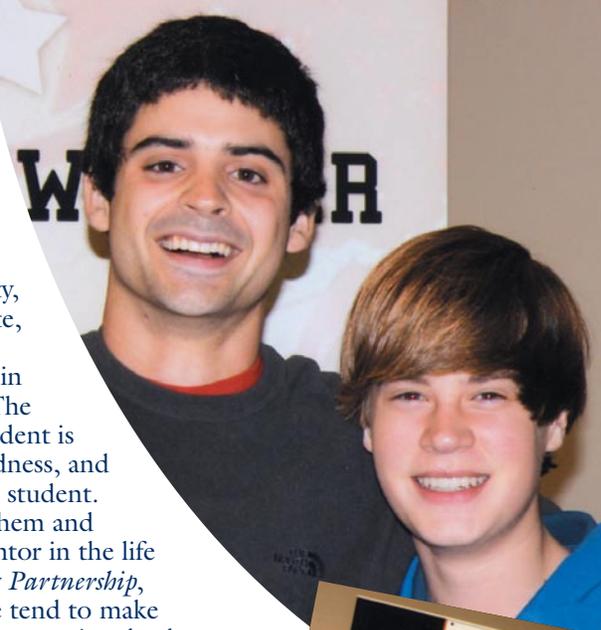


Jackson Prep seeks to encourage students by giving them a strong support system. Traditionally, this circle of support has included the Prep administration, board of trustees, faculty, and parents. Recently, through the Global Leadership Institute, this circle of support has enlarged to include adult mentors for students in the tenth grade. The mentors will be involved in the lives of the students throughout their high school years. The potential impact of the adult mentor upon the life of their student is significant. Each mentor has committed his or her time, giftedness, and wisdom to enhance and encourage the lives of his or her Prep student.

Students need informed loving adults to walk alongside them and give them good counsel throughout their lives. The presence of a caring adult mentor in the life of student can make a significant difference. According to the *National Mentoring Partnership*, providing adult mentors for students helps produce benefits such as: young people tend to make better grades, young people improve their self esteem, young people are less likely to get involved in drugs and alcohol and young people tend to get along better with others. **An adult mentor getting involved in the life of a student presents both challenges and joys, but at Jackson Prep, we believe the investment will produce great dividends.**

Walt Mueller, a youth culture expert and author of *Youth Culture 101*, states two distinct characteristics of youth culture. First, youth culture is changing at a rapid pace. Second, the voices of youth culture are loud and many. Any adult mentor wanting to effectively care for the heart of a teen must know the voices and keep up the pace. This challenge is daunting but definitely worth the effort.

Adult mentors can give students honest counsel and paint a realistic picture of negative influences in their youth culture today, including the power of the media, the deception of the marketing industry, the difficulties of negative peer pressure, the prevalence of teen sex, the appeal of materialism, the destructiveness of substance abuse, the desperation of teenage depression and suicide. Obviously, the world is poised and ready to raise our students. America is inundated with teens the world has raised. **Prep's Global Leadership Institute Mentor/Mentee Program is designed to address the needs of students in the midst of their ever-changing, fast-paced world.** Adult mentors can get involved in their student's lives, know their culture and point them in a positive direction for life. As adult mentors invest in the lives of Prep students, they will encourage students to rise above the negative influences and seek to live lives of distinction in service to society. Adult mentors can help students find their unique place in the world and challenge them to be leaders with high standards and exemplary character.



involvement

pat

by Lisa Hubbard, PAT President



Thank you to all the volunteers who have assisted with Prep's fall events. The PAT has helped host three Prep Preview events, two teacher luncheons, five Global Leadership events, one homecoming reception, six brown bag lunches, two tailgate parties, three salad lunches for moms, two PAT meetings/parent lunches, a College Fair dinner, and an art reception!

We will be on the lookout for the holiday "partridge in a pear tree!" This does not include back-to-school parties, cards and meals from the care committee, teachers' lounge snacks, weeds pulled and flower beds beautified, or concession stand shifts. Thank you to all who have served and will continue to serve in the new year. Jackson Prep is a special place because of the support provided by our parents!

Please check your calendars to make sure that you are saving the date for the January PAT parents' lunch and PAT meeting. We will meet in the refurbished Multi-Purpose Room at noon on Thursday, January 14, to hear updates for the second semester. Specifics of this meeting will follow in the new e-mail blasts parents receive each week.

If organizing and closet cleaning are on your 2010 resolution list, please remember the Junior Class Garage Sale on Saturday, March 6. This a huge community-wide event run exclusively by the Class of 2010 students and their parents. A portion of their proceeds help a community service project and help fund prom and graduation-night activities. More information about donation dropoffs will follow. Businesses looking for tax-deductible year-end donations for unsold merchandise are welcome! Tay Morgan is the parent chair and can be reached by e-mail at Tay@TayMorganDesigns.

Another event not to be missed will be the annual PAT Fundraiser. Join the Prep family on Saturday, April 10, for a great auction, fabulous food by Fresh Cut Catering, and live music. The 2009 Peace, Love and Music was a huge success, and the 2010 event looks to be even bigger! Details will follow as Chairs Adrienne Howie, Melissa Skelton, Melanie Dowell, and Elisa Phillips enlist everyone's help to make this worthy cause fun and profitable. Monies raised go to campus and program improvements. The PAT counts on many volunteers to help with this event for the many folks looking for a fun night!

Thank you to everyone who has supported the PAT this year! If you have not had a chance to get involved, make 2010 the year to come out, meet Prep parents and students, and serve YOUR school! Everyone is blessed in the process. May you and your family have a wonderful holiday season!

Happy Holidays

from Jackson Prep



english literature

by Nathan Devine, Senior High Literature Instructor



Many scholars of repute have bewailed declining literacy rates, as if computers would forever replace the book in our time (most recently Dana Gioia, poet and past president of the *National Endowment for the Arts*). I confidently assure you: this will not occur.

Our transition from print to the digital culture will eventually mimic the evolution from orality to literacy that took place in Europe from the late Classical period through the Middle Ages. That's a large chunk of historical time, yet when considering that we have made progress exponentially since the Industrial Revolution, it's understandable that a veritable epoch could be reproduced in a mere century and a half.

The precipitous drop in reading levels and a staggering escalation in technology use will find a happy medium without our intervention, even if that equilibrium differs from the diet of literature and other entertainment media of a few generations ago. The experts and poets know their subjects and their importance—that's why they are so doom-and-gloom—but they don't consider history as well. I would bet that in two generations we find literacy rebounding significantly. And while English departments may be in trouble now and in the short-term future, they are not headed for extinction.

Readers and teachers of literature in 2009 are the new medieval scriptoria: preserve the texts, pass them on, and the public will rediscover them. When our civilization colonizes Jupiter (or whichever sci-fi concept is made flesh next), we'll find Dante and Shakespeare there waiting for us. I'll wager that history proves me right, even if I'm not around to read about it.

