

Dear Laurel Families,

Welcome to another school year. As I write, our heat wave has broken and it was cool enough last night that I needed a sweater, so I know the school year approaches! We look forward to an exciting year—not only will we welcome 130 new students to Laurel, we also will unveil several new programs: May Term for Grades 5-12; Class Trips in the Upper School; our One-to-One program in Grades 7 and 8; a refined focus on World Language in Grades 3 and 4 and all the other possibilities for learning that await your small sons or daughters of all sizes!

While we celebrate ongoing accomplishments, such as our North Star Collaborative with Warner Girls' Leadership Academy, which now enters its fourth year, we also are pleased to launch several new initiatives, including our Perspectives Program in the Upper School, which will allow girls to examine power, poverty and privilege from a local, national and global view. This coming year we also will begin piloting the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program in Grades 3, 6 and 9 while anticipating adding additional grades in the years to come. The Olweus program enjoys a broad evidence base that documents its efficacy.

We expect that this program, as with all of our unfolding initiatives, will integrate and enhance much of the work we already do around our mission: To inspire each girl to fulfill her promise and to better the world, and our values statement: In a community of learners, Laurel girls are courageous, ethical and compassionate. Both serve as the foundation for all we do.

Many faculty members have spent the summer revising courses, investigating new programming and reflecting on their practice—a teacher's preparation is year-round. Some have traveled, attended conferences, met in small groups, read and written about teaching and learning. Their energy and commitment inspire me daily. We will post information on our new faculty and staff members on our website after August 5. Look for the link in the announcement section at www.LaurelSchool.org.

We have been busy at Lyman Circle with our Dining Room renovation and the installation of the elevator to the Third Floor. The elevator work continues apace while the refurbishment and improved ventilation of the existing Dining Room, along with the additional new spaces we are creating off the “old” Dining Room, move along nicely. As is often the case with construction projects, we have learned that the timeline is a moving target and that we will not be able to eat lunch in the Dining Room during the first few weeks of school. However, we will improvise and serve lunch in the Small Gym until the contractors can safely turn the Dining Room over to us.

The new expanded sections of the Dining Room will be ready shortly before Thanksgiving and we look forward to the benefits those additional spaces will provide. I am so appreciative of the work MaryAnn Pellerano and her staff and so many others in the school have done on behalf of this project. The adults who work in the building all summer have shown tremendous flexibility and good humor in coping with noise and dust—this is, of course, indicative of the grace they demonstrate in the presence of the children all year long!

For the second year, our theme as a community of learners will be the concept of sustainability. Certainly, we are interested in environmental sustainability, but we also hope to explore what sustains us as learners, as high-achieving, motivated children and adults in our community. The Assessment of Inclusivity and Multiculturalism (AIM) survey, the next step in the process that NAIS (The National Association of Independent Schools) designed and that we began last school year, will be sent to each family later in the fall. Please take the time to fill it out when you receive it. It will provide important data for us as we consider what we already do well in terms of inclusion and multicultural education and what we might do better. Thanks to those who completed our Parent Satisfaction Survey earlier in the summer.

The Center for Research on Girls (CRG) at Laurel School continues to garner national attention as we put the world's best research to work for girls. In the course of the coming year our "21st Century Athenas: Aligning Achievement and Well-Being" research team will continue to collect data from participating girls, parents, and teachers in Grades 7, 9 and 11. We remain appreciative of your willingness to contribute to this important project and are eager to learn more about how to support girls at Laurel and beyond.

I urge you to join us on Thursday, August 11 at 7:30 p.m. at the Butler Campus for Catherine Steiner-Adair's presentation on "Safety Nets for the Internet: How Adults Can Stay Connected to Girls in the Age of Technology." Dr. Steiner-Adair, a Harvard researcher, is a CRG Advisory Board Member; her talk, which fits beautifully with groundwork we laid as a community last year, will be the keynote for CRG's second Biennial Symposium. The symposium, which reflects work done at Laurel over the past two years, is drawing over 40 registrants from more than 19 schools around the country. To RSVP for the August 11 presentation, email Kim Lobe at kLobe@LaurelSchool.org.

In our last few weeks of summer, I hope you and your children will take some time to be together as a family, to read or re-read books that you love, and to enjoy life, unencumbered by shovels, snowsuits or the cold. In our family, we measure how the girls and Atticus have grown on the doorjamb of the dining room in the house in which we spend each summer. As we prepare to send a daughter off to college, I see the row of marks on the doorway and marvel at how quickly she has grown. I urge us all to take some time away from our computers or cell phones to be with our daughters and sons in the coming weeks. Our undivided attention—not all the time but sometimes—is a great gift we can give.

A reminder that our Upper School athletes start their season on August 1; the Middle School athletic season begins the first day of school. We look forward to welcoming your family to another school year. Thank you for the privilege of being your partner in educating your child.

Warmly,



Ann V. Klotz