

Youth Initiative High School

Kaleidoscope

Fall 2013

I ♥ YIHS

Back to School

One year older. One year wiser. Though some may not want to admit it, the return to school is filled with excitement, anticipation, and possibility. But it isn't just the students who mark time by the cycle of the academic year. It is all of us who are lucky enough to have them in our lives. Teachers and parents also get a tickle of butterflies in their stomach that first day after Labor Day; their children are one year closer to adulthood, their students look different, are different.

For YIHS the return to school means a return to who we are, what we are meant to be doing. It is a time for us to reflect on the school we have become, the people that make up our community, and the work that needs yet to be done. Join us in this issue as we come back to school, back to work, and back together.

Starting Over

By Matthew Voz, YIHS Administrator

Seven years ago, when I was first hired full time at the school, I didn't get the job that I had applied for. After two years as a part-time history and English teacher, I drew up my resume and threw my hat in the ring for the administrator's job. We can all now

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let out a collective, retrospective sigh of relief that they hired Liz Cox. I was a 27-year-old know-it-all who didn't really know much at all, but Jacob helped find a way to keep me on staff full-time and I will be forever grateful for that. I was hired as the assistant development director and greatly increased my teaching load. I was happy, exceedingly happy. I could finally direct all of my attention to working at a place that I loved, with people that I respected, doing something that really satisfied me. It challenged me, too. I was asked to do things I had never done before, but the bulk of my work was academic, and academics is something I had done for over 20 years. And I was good at it. So it wasn't long before I was quite comfortable in what I was doing. Certainly I kept learning things here and there, and teenagers are great at showing you your weaknesses so it wasn't as though I felt like I was punching a clock or anything. But over time I started to feel a little too familiar, I started to feel as though perhaps I had read *Brave New World* one too many times.

It was around this time that our administrator, Liz Cox, began to intimate that she was thinking about moving on from her position. I remember when she got done telling Shawn, Jacob, and I, there was a long silence. We all expressed our shock and well wishes. And then, without thinking about it I blurted out, "I'd like to move into more administrative work," or some such nonsense. I say nonsense because I hadn't given it the slightest thought as I was moving comfortably through what I had been doing for the past several years. But as soon as I said it I realized that I actually would "like to move into more administrative work." The words came before the thoughts (as they too often do when I am speaking) but after a bit of time I realized that what I had said was perfectly in line with what I had been feeling. I wanted to take on the challenge of being the school administrator.

Once again I was going to ask the school; the students, the parents, and my colleagues, to take a risk on my behalf, to give me an opportunity to try something challenging, to sometimes fail, and to grow as a person. And I am lucky and humbled that they ultimately granted me this gift as they have so many times in the past.

In the six month interim between the time it was decided that I would take over as administrator and the time I actually started my new job, I was struck several times with a pang of terror that I was not cut out for this job, that I couldn't manage it, that I didn't know what I'd gotten myself into. But I am an impetuous man by nature and I found that most of the time I was all too confident that I could handle this job, that I could do this or that better than it had ever been done. I waited, with an impatient itch, for the day that I could get into my new office and get the job done, better and more efficiently than it had



Challenge: Matt on his first day as administrator.

ever been done before. In other words, I was ripe for a good lesson.

An easy way to gauge how much impact an event or circumstance has had on one's character is to reflect on one's experience of elapsed time. If something feels like it happened a long time ago, chances are it was a formative experience and changed one's perspective on reality, it taught us something, and stretched out time in the process. If something seemed to happen "just yesterday", well, time flies when you're having fun and fun almost never stimulates growth. My first day as the administrator at YIHS was about a month and a half ago while I am writing this, but it feels like about ten years ago. In short, it changed my perspective, and fast.



Growth: Matt on his 67th day as administrator.

Very quickly I realized what an excellent administrator Liz Cox really was, and very quickly I began to feel like an ill-suited, disorganized, overmatched buffoon. The nadir of my experience was a rather pathetic picture: I sat alone in my office after a long day of telling people things they didn't want to hear. The walls were bare and sterile, devoid of any personal effects; a crack in the plaster ran disapprovingly along the wall. In my hands I held a personnel folder and for the life of me I didn't know what to do with it. All I wanted to do was file some completely banal, bureaucratic information—and I couldn't figure out where it went. I was, temporarily, defeated. I was somewhere I'd never been before, doing things I'd never done before, *being someone I'd never been before*.

And then I realized, this is what it must be like to be a 9th grader at YIHS; a stranger in a strange land, discombobulated by the omnipresence of things you almost

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but don't fully understand, unable at times to carry out what seem like the simplest of tasks.

But "Allah does not burden a soul beyond that it can bear" (Qur'an, 2:286) and sooner or later something in us—in me, in 9th graders, in little babies, in everyone that makes that choice—responds to the stimuli of challenge and grows. We get stronger, smarter, more flexible, or less flexible, as the situation dictates—in a word, we evolve. We can all do it, and not just over millions of years, but in a single lifetime. What is called forth, arises from within us, and what is not needed withers away. And what a great environment, this school, where the goal is not merely to survive, but to thrive. Thank you to everyone in this school for helping to create it.

Back From School

By Shawn Lavoie, YIHS Teacher

I spent last school year studying at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE), where after 9 months of intensive reading, writing and thinking, I earned a masters in the Arts in Education program. After teaching for 5 years and taking the Waldorf foundations courses, I still felt hungry, still uninitiated in field of education--the theory, the history, the current movements. For my own growth and for the growth of YIHS, I decided to seek out higher education. My roots of experience were solid, but my branches yearned for breadth.

So I took a year to study the field at a historic place, close to where I grew up, that brings together a lot of smart people from around the world. I packed the Honda Fit with my family and our things. I tucked my teaching experience in my backpack. I had all my deepest questions at the tip of my tongue.



Shawn loves to jump!

Inspiration from the Field

In the fall I took a class with my academic advisor, an amazing educator and writer named Sara Lawrence Lightfoot. Professor Lawrence Lightfoot is a striking figure: tall, piercing eyes, and always impeccably dressed in patterns of



rich colors.
She has been
a professor at
Harvard for
almost 40
years, and
when she
became a
professor,
she was one
of only a
handful of
African
American
women to
hold tenure in
Harvard's



Shawn making his classmates self-conscious with his impressive height and good looks. The golden tassel signifies his receipt of the Intellectual Contribution and Faculty Tribute Award.

history. In short, she is impressively accomplished, but more, she is graceful and wise. In her classes, she manages to pass on some of her wisdom and grace.

From Professor Lawrence Lightfoot's class, "The Ecology of Education," I learned to appreciate the complex journey of learning. Teachers can play a transformative role if they understand how their students develop along this journey. Children grow up at the intersection of the home, peer, and social spheres, all of which overlap in school. Her class highlighted a teacher's responsibility to see students in their fullest sense and to see schools as nested within many layers of influence. I see YIHS trying to incorporate students' multiple spheres, but I know how difficult that can be. Integrating family life and school life, or social life and school life, often leads to dire conflict.

In her excellent book *The Essential Conversation: What Parents and Teachers Can Learn From Each Other* (2003)--which I think the YIHS faculty and the parents should study together--she zeroes in on this contested territory between teachers and parents. Home and school intertwine in the shared hopes and responsibilities of teachers and parents. Both want the best for the student, yet it's astounding how fraught this collaboration can feel! Then, YIHS adds student collaborators into the mix, yikes! Embracing the tensions and vulnerability of parent-teacher-student collaboration is not

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Shawn receiving his Masters of Education from Harvard University; son Julian is not impressed.

easy, but I'm returning this year with a renewed belief in how central and generative it is to the school's mission.

Vulnerability and collaboration were two guiding themes of my year-long exploration. They lie at the core of teacher and school transformation. Several of my classes championed teacher collaboration, critiquing the solitary norm of the profession--closed doors, "my" room, "my" class, "my" subject. In "Group Learning" and "Student/Teacher Collaboration" and "The Collaborative Process" (a theater class), I studied many examples of impressive collaboration. Key to all these stories were moments, some quite extended, of vulnerability: schools confronting "undiscussables" like race and sexism, teachers giving each other honest and direct feedback, and students taking risks with peers to try out a

new idea in a group project or to seek help from classmates. I learned a lot about processes, protocols, organizational rituals that encourage vulnerability and risk-taking. These examples struck a resonant chord with my experience of Waldorf education, which stresses the continual transformation and "awakeness" of the teacher. This year I look forward to collaborating with my colleagues, working alongside Jacob as a mentor to new and experienced teachers. Together I hope to continue to innovate and deepen the teaching at YIHS--and beyond. As our recent work with Baltimore Youth Initiative shows, we have a lot to gain from collaborators around the world.

The main thrust of my year was exploring my own field, the arts. In the core courses for my Arts in Education program, I studied with fellow arts educators, artists, and arts administrators. Though my actual, personal artistic production went down over the year--I did manage to create and perform two new clown acts!--my appreciation increased for what we can learn in and through the arts. Art has many educational powers, and I am particularly inspired by its ability to build community. Art has the power to unite people: in creation, in performance, in appreciation. We studied the story of *El Sistema*, the Venezuelan youth orchestra movement that has in recent years taken hold in



the US, and how its program stresses excellence (beautiful and challenging symphonic music) while also highly valuing inclusion and participation. I see hints of their story in some of YIHS's most successful performances and art-projects: barn-mural painting, school plays and circuses, and community performances. I want to help create more opportunities for students to create excellent artwork with the express purpose of building community within the school and in the larger community.

Grateful and Striving

Certain kinds of knowledge you learn by reflecting, thinking, discussing, reading and writing--those were the ones I gobbled up in my year at HGSE. They will help me when I plan for classes, reflect on my practice, and collaborate with my colleagues. They help me understand the expansive field of education, with its movements, fads, history, and powerful players. Other equally, if not more, important kinds of knowledge can only come through practice. They take time and are the fruit of long relationships and sustained endeavor. Those are the kinds of knowledge I get to work on at YIHS. For this opportunity, I am truly grateful.

Yet, I return with more than a sense of gratitude; my work at YIHS is a personal calling, and moreover, our work at YIHS is a world calling. We are very blessed to have such a group of committed parents, students, teachers and community supporters who make this educational experiment possible. Many of my wonderful peers at HGSE are now working in schools, communities, prisons that don't have our resources--and not just monetary resources, but the vision, leadership and chutzpah to try what we're trying. Many of my peers were very interested in my experience. Many of them, I think, didn't believe it was possible for them in their home communities. This, for me, is sad. It is something we can help change. YIHS has the responsibility to let others know what we're doing. We have something to offer and to learn in the broad field of education.

Grateful and comfortable is not enough. Grateful and striving to change the education status quo: that's what YIHS is called to do. *Let us be grateful and relentlessly striving!*

So, in short, I'm glad to be back at work with you.

YIHS

My So-Called Summer Vacation

By: Maris "Too Legit To Quit" Bock

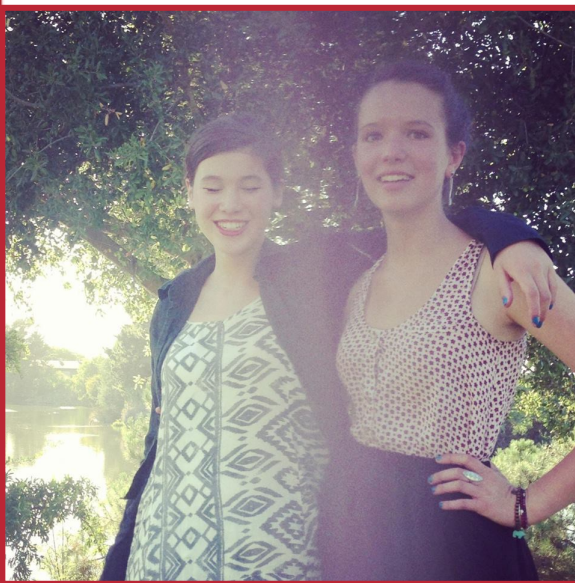
This year I did two things during my summer vacation. I first went to California to attend Oxbow School of Art for two weeks. Oxbow is a semester school for high school juniors and seniors that offers a summer program. I also attended Concordia *Les Voyageurs* program, camping in the wilderness and canoeing in the Boundary Waters just like the voyagers might have done in the 17th century speaking French and only French for the entire month!

Oxbow

I flew by myself to the San Francisco airport and was picked up by a really happy counselor named Sarah. We collected the other girls who were flying into that airport and jumped in the car. Within about 15 minutes we had run out of gas on the freeway, the San Francisco FREEWAY. We were driving and then we just kind of stopped right there in the middle of the road. After we got road assistance and got more gas, we were on our way again.

The Oxbow campus is beautiful. They have four studios (painting, new media, printmaking, and sculpture) that have glass walls which lets lots of light in. It's right on the river and there's grass everywhere.

For the first week I spent my time enjoying Oxbow's amazing food (and all you can eat popsicle bar) laughing with my spunky blonde roomie and going to art basics lessons, which is where I met Claire. We were like exact double of ourselves; we were those kids who were super "out there," had way too much fun every second of our lives,



Maris, left, with spiritual doppelgänger, Claire.

borderline obnoxious kids who at any other place would be kind of shunned, but it was art camp. It actually got to the point where a girl admitted that she was afraid to approach me because I was "so cool" which I thought was hilarious.

On the weekend we went into San Francisco and made some artsy thriftiness happen. After we had purchased all the Powerpuff Girl coloring books and seductive baby dolls we could ever want, we went downtown and got pizza, eating it with a

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homeless man who had an awesome sticker collection. What we were supposed to be doing in town was getting stuff for our projects, because for the second week at Oxbow you choose an art project of your own creation and work on it for a final art show at the end of the week. I drew a series of pictures called "Drum Leaf."

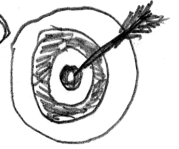


Maris's *Drum Leaf* installation, above, with detail, left.

With my project I wanted to express the beauty of things around us, and the fact that we shouldn't go seeking out beauty. We should instead sit still and see the beauty in where we are.

Claire made a doll house of horrors using mangled Barbie dolls and blood splatters. My friend Will made a stop motion movie with me spazzing out in the background consuming, like, five fudge popsicles just in the movie. On the last night everyone was crying and saying goodbye and we had a huge bonfire. We burned a bunch of cardboard sculptures (kind of like Burning Man) and I felt like I was being torn away from my home. At Oxbow, I found a place where I could be my complete, raw self and people liked me. I could do what I wanted and people would go under the false impression that I was "cool."

SHIX



Concordia

The first thing that happens when arrive at Concordia in Bemidji, MN is to get signed in. Everyone's asking you questions in French and you just kind of have to smile and nod your head. Most of the time it turns out not to be a yes or no question. I picked Vivienne as my French name. The other girls in my camp were named Ocean, Rivière and Adele.

I was a four week camper, so we went off into the Boundary Waters to do voyager-like things to warm up like canoeing and camping. The first few days were slow and steady. We learned how to canoe properly and I got to hang out with the three other girls who I was going to spend a month with. The first two weeks we

spent in the Boundary Waters and canoed all day, every day for about five day and then we went back to basecamp in Bemidji.

Meanwhile during the whole time we worked on assignments and journaling and other school-like stuff. The real challenge started with the first portage we did. There were four of us, and two counselors, so we had three canoes. We canoed up to a little trail into the woods and we unload all our canoes. Then we each took a canoe on our backs, really heavy aluminum canoes. I took one and two of the other girls (total beasts I might add, they were like powerhouses of people) did as well. I got it on my shoulders (instant pain) and start walking on the trail, then I realized it was not a trail, but a plank over a marsh that made me feel like I was in northern China. After the planks came a real sketchy trail, and after that mud. Not like a lil' mud puddle, like huge pits of mud that you lose your shoes in. After about five minutes I was shaking and sweating and swearing like no one's business and the mosquitoes are biting me, but I couldn't get them off because I was still fighting to keep the canoe up. I'm not really sure when I started crying but I totally was just because it hurt so much. After a while I couldn't go any further and just dropped it there and walked away. After some walking I found River and she looked up at me from where she was sitting and said, "I've never not been able to



push through something before, but this I just physically can't do." I had literally thought the same thing seconds earlier.

Then she stood up and I said, "Let's go find Ocean." We ventured up the path and found Ocean also sitting next to her canoe crying. We sat there for a bit thinking, "Maybe if I broke my leg we could all just get med-flighted out of here." We all felt like we were going to throw up due to physical exhaustion.

Finally we got it together enough that all three of us working as a team could get to the end, and the counselors had to get the rest. That day we portaged about a mile and a half, and every day after that it was wake up at three A.M., canoe for a couple of minutes and portage at least three times a day. Once a counselor and I portaged sixteen times in one day.

We went cliff diving, sang little mermaid songs, we saw a moose! Danielle and I screamed going under the false pretense that a turtle was a dinosaur. Once we even tipped a canoe with three people and our backpacks in it. Needless to say it was very wet.

On our last day of camping and very last portage what was first a trail turned into a puddle which then again turned into a marsh and it just got to the point where the water was up to our thighs in a "*petite lac*." Other people were literally canoeing past us and we laughed because we knew we were way more hardcore than they were. It was the best.

Next, we went to Canada where we got stopped at the border and interrogated because of our "highly suspicious" child-locked big blue van. Once in Canada we came across an Indian reenactment which was wild and awesome. We went thrift shopping and rocked out with "Mama and Papa Swag" (the counselors Ludo and Danielle) to the Lion King soundtrack in the huge blue van which we called The Wizard with the Blue Hat. By the time it was over I had weird new appendages on my arms and legs that people assure me are muscles but feel like they just shouldn't be there.

This summer I discovered things about myself and about the world that I never knew. Yeah, sure some of it was hard, but now I know just how much I'm capable of and how many amazing people there are in so many different places. After this summer I can say I found love in California, and I found my strength in the northern woods of Minnesota.

A Mother's Message to All Our 9th Graders (and one in particular)

By Anne O'Connor, YIHS Parent

The willow tree that was only as tall as you in kindergarten now shades a large part of the playground. And now it's to high school. So much has changed and like the tree, you have grown strong, smart, and ready.

You are going off into the world as a high school student, as a young woman. There are a few things I want you to know. These are things that you already know, but most of us need to just keep remembering them throughout our lives. I know I do go on, and maybe you don't want to hear these things just now. But here they are for you, should you want them. More than anything, I give you my best wishes for a life of love, happiness, a healthy body, busy and productive hands, an active and vibrant mind, and a kind and generous heart.

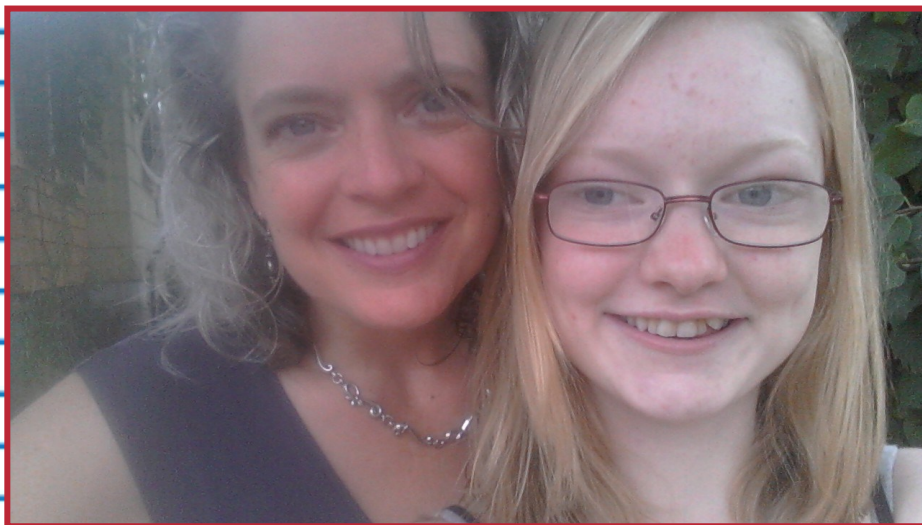
1. Whatever is happening now, it will pass. Beautiful things, miserable things, heart-warming and heart-aching: they all come and then, they all go. Love and appreciate what's happening now as best you can. It won't always be here. This is critical to remember during hard times, when the world seems bleak and pointless. But it's also good to remember when something is wonderful, because we ought to try and...
2. Soak up every wonderful moment that you get. Relish the friendliness of a stranger, notice when your brother is being kind, savor every bite, hear each song, enjoy your bed and the comfort of sleep, look at people and feel them with you, pay attention to the fact that you can move your body and...
3. Remember that you have a perfect body. Your body is your friend, your ally, your absolute hardest worker. It will do whatever it can to help you get to where you're going, help you do whatever it is you want to do. It is your faithful companion and your best friend. So treat it well and kindly so that you can work together. Listen to your body when it complains: it needs something from you. Your body is an amazing, intricate system: a miracle. Don't forget to...
4. Be grateful. Every single day, we are given this gift of waking, of seeing, of moving, of hearing, of touching our worlds. Notice and give thanks for what we are given. We can do so much, we can make life what we want to make it, especially if we...
5. Don't forget how powerful we are. You, dear girl, are one powerful human being. You are starting to understand some of that power and figuring out how to best use it. As you learn how to channel that energy and strength into

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your projects and wishes, you will be unstoppable. You already know how this feels. You also have already experienced the ways that your power can separate you from people. You are beginning to see the ways that you can use your power to connect. Which is vital, because...

6. We are all connected. You already feel this, if you don't know it consciously. You feel the weight of a stranger's pain, you feel the buoyancy of a room, and you soak it all up. More than many people, you feel the connections. It's good to feel them, and it's good to know how to manage these connections so they don't take you down. Don't take what isn't yours. But appreciate that, at every level, we are connected. There is an elaborate system of connections from me to you to the universe to the hungry girl in Kenya, to the lonely man in Chicago. We are all connected to the radiant and perfect world of wholeness, and it is helpful to remember that such a world exists and to visit it often. And meanwhile, since so much of our time is here, on this physical plane, it's a good idea to...
7. Know how to say no. I'll never forget you, at 3-years-old, as a little boy tried to block you from getting back to me over a little bridge. You stood there, strong and shouting clearly, "NO!" He, of course, bowed to your strength and clarity. I knew then that you have everything you need. You still do. Being able to be say what you need is a skill that will serve you and those around you well in your life. Even if you don't feel like someone can hear you, you need to keep saying what you need so that you remember yourself. So that you find your way to get what you need. And, of course, it's sometimes just as



The author with daughter Irene, class of 2017

YHS



important that you say, "YES!" But I'll trust that you'll be able to figure out what's needed when. There will be times (many times) when you may not know what you want, so it's good to learn to...

8. Trust. Trust yourself, trust life, and trust in the goodness of people and the world. Yes, you will get hurt. You'll get hurt anyway. But if you learn to trust that even when life feels chaotic and impossible, you'll be okay...you *will* be okay. You are okay. You can have what you need, almost always. It's one of the advantages that you have of being born a woman here—in this place, now—in this time. But you will have to do some work for it, and trusting is pretty close to the top of the work list. One key way that you can figure out what to trust is to...
9. Get quiet every day. Meditation isn't high on your list of priorities at the moment. But I suspect that will change for you over time. You've always needed "quiet time" so that you can regenerate your strength and good humor. You take it when you go for walks, or when you lay in bed and wonder, or when you stand outside in the cold. We all need this kind of time for contemplation. When we get quiet, we can hear the real voices of wisdom that lie deep within us. You have a lot of wisdom. If you want to hang on to it, you'll need to give it a space to grow and be a part of you. Wisdom is shy...it is quiet and soft. The voices that speak loudly in your head, yelling and ranting...those aren't your voices of wisdom. Don't mistake loud for smart. You have to get quiet to hear the good stuff. And there's one more thing...
- 10 I love you. Completely, totally, without reservation. There is nothing (really) that you could do that would take away the solid and endless well of love that I carry for you. That doesn't mean I'll always like what you do, or appreciate every way that you have of acting in the world. But I want you to remember that, whatever is happening in the external, fleeting world, I will always see your beauty and strength and kindness. I want to stay with you through these coming years, to keep talking and being together. Please know that there is nothing (truly) that you could do to take that love away. You can come to me with any problem, tell me anything and I won't hold it against you. I am here to help you however I can: to listen, to talk, to do something, to do nothing. I know that you and I are entering a new phase; you don't need me the way that you once did. You need to figure things out for yourself and be who you're going to be. So go on, then. I'll be here when you need me.

2012-2013 Annual Report

From Development and Administration

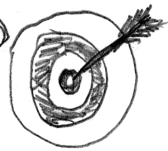
The Administration and Development offices merged and divided and merged again throughout all of last year in a beautiful and efficient dance of institutional flexibility. At the end of the 2011-2012 school year our Development Director, Shawn Lavoie left to attend graduate school. Development Assistant, Matthew Voz, took his place in the interim, and Dave-Hibbard Rode was hired to assume Matt's former responsibilities. All this was facilitated by the gentle and capable hand of Administrator, Liz Cox. At the end of 2012-2013, after one heck of an administrative Chinese fire drill, Shawn has returned as Development Director, Dave continues as his assistant, Matt has filled the position of administrator, and Liz has gone off to new adventures in the wide, wide world.

Despite all, both offices had a very successful year. For the administration, no news is, most often, good news. Such was the case with the past school year. The calendar of events, meetings, fundraisers, and classes was held strongly and with ease and the year passed without any significant hiccoughs.

The Development Office had a very successful year in a number of areas. Liz Cox lent a helping hand, managing the Matching Gift Program to a full 400% match of student fundraising. A renovation of the website was successful and drove web traffic to the school to an unprecedented rate.

This increased web traffic helped publicize our new boarding program that dramatically increased our enrollment for the 2013-2014 school year. Indeed, the boarding program has the potential to be a major addition to the educational and financial life of the school. In the 2013-2014 school year almost 15% of our enrollment will be comprised of boarding students living with local host families, with a huge effect on our budget. What is more we will enroll students in the upcoming year from Thailand, Mexico, Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Grenada, giving our student body a cultural diversity not available in the local environment. Local enrollment was also much better than expected with a strong group coming over from PRWS and healthy interest from students from area public schools.

Development also oversaw its annual round of public events including a successful panel discussion and a beautiful art night. With the help of a great group of parents the Development Office continued to create a stable foundation for the school's future.



From the Faculty

The 2012-2013 academic year was marked by some significant transitions for key Faculty members. Core Faculty member Shawn Lavoie was on leave for the full year while completing a Masters of Education degree at Harvard University. To help fill this void, YIHS brought on board a new Core Faculty member, Dave Hibbard-Rode, who took on English, Carpentry, and Earth Science courses. In the second half of the year YIHS prepared for an Administrative transition, with the departure of Liz Cox at the end of the year and her replacement in the Administrator's position by Matthew Voz. Altogether, about 25 faculty members taught at YIHS this year, with a core leadership group of about 7.

Dave Hibbard-Rode helped to get the year off to a strong and fresh start with a major reform and renewal of our annual back-to-school Camping and Orientation Trip. Bringing to bear his experience in several wilderness education programs, Dave brought the Camping Trip to a new location, Black River State Forest, and significantly modified the organization and scheduling of the week. All students and adult chaperones were asked to commit to be there for the full week and the student Houses were made the important organization units for meals, activities, and an overnight wilderness backpacking expedition. Feedback collected from students, parents, and chaperones about the trip were strongly positive, although there were many requests for a different location next year.

Another major change this year was the addition of 10 minutes of silent or guided meditation to the Morning Circle routine each day, as well as the inclusion of Morning Circle as a Pass/Fail class on students' transcripts. These changes were introduced with intention of injecting new life into Morning Circle and boosting student timeliness in the mornings. The Faculty considers both measures to have been successful and they will be continued in the coming school year.

Members of 2012-2013 Senior Class also experienced some important changes in expectations and practice. New guidelines for Senior Projects were introduced that defined the a timeline for planning projects, specified expectations for the amount of time to be devoted, and added the requirement of a written component for each project. Senior Projects were presented in March, earlier than in the past, with a longer target length of about a half hour. The Faculty deems the results of these changes to be successful across the board. Seniors were also required to submit at least one application to a college or university, which resulted in a 90% college acceptance rate and a number of prestigious



scholarships and awards. Finally, seniors were all expected to participate in an apprenticeship or internship during their senior year. In the end, not all did this, but many did and we hope to expand this program in the future.

One memorable highlight of the year was the Spring Play, William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Director Steve Laurdan was supported by a set design team led by Dave Hibbard-Rode and a costume team led by Jessica Hooper and Anna Rodriguez, who each worked with students during the arts elective block leading up to the performance. The results were spectacular and set the already high bar for YIHS drama even higher.

Finally, one of the most exciting developments of the year was the emergence of a YIHS sister school, the Baltimore Youth Initiative High School. After offering advice and consultation to the founders of BYIHS, Jacob Hundt traveled with 2 YIHS students to Baltimore in November to offer a two week block at the new school. Shawn Lavoie also visited and BYIHS administrator Dr. Geri Peak visited Viroqua in April, laying plans for a joint BYIHS-YIHS training institute in Viroqua during the summer of 2013.

-Prepared By Jacob Hundt, Faculty Chair

From the Finance Committee

The fiscal year ending in June of 2013 was a complete success. At the beginning of last year, the Finance Committee and Board approved a budget with a deficit of \$15,343. However, due largely to increases in enrollment, we ended the year with a net income of \$30,180. Because we had more students than expected, we saw a \$21,000 increase in tuition income over budget. The other important factor was a \$10,600 increase in the Student Matching Gifts Program. We also saw below budget payroll costs and \$5,726 worth of donated teaching.

In addition, flexibility on the part of our donors and parents allowed us to have much more consistent cash flow throughout the year. We did not use our line of credit and so have that added financial capacity if we require it in the future.

Because we do not own our building, our balance sheet remains relatively simple, consisting largely of Donations and Tuitions that we are owed. At this point we have no long term or short term debts.

-Prepared By Lars Bergan, Board President, Former Board Treasurer

YIHS



From the Board of Directors

2012 – 2013 was another relatively quiet but nevertheless very good year for the YIHS Board of Trustee—currently consisting of Terry Beck (at-large rep), Lars Bergan (at-large rep), Kate Buche-Pattison (student rep), Jack Corbin (student rep), Kady Fox (faculty rep), Paul Grenier (parent rep), Ray Kolenko (parent rep), Christine Larson (faculty rep), Jim Pattison (parent rep), Prudence Tippins (at-large rep), Tom Vanderhyden (at-large rep), with Matt Voz and Jacob Hundt always in attendance. This is a group that, although frequently having different opinions, is very cooperative, actually seeming to like each other. Meetings are fun.

While a number of issues take up Board time (such as how to develop and expand the boarding program, what kind of fee structures are appropriate, how to feed and enliven all-school meetings), our main focus has been and continues to be the future location of YIHS. With the innumerable problems and expenses of being in the LandMark Center and the determination, several years ago, that buying and renovating the building was not financially reasonable, we have been looking high and low for a better location or land on which to build. That search has recently turned up some very interesting possibilities, and the Board in 2013 -2014 will be looking at how to finance a land purchase and what building and grounds design will best accommodate future growth.

-Prepared by Terry Beck, Board of Trustees Vice President

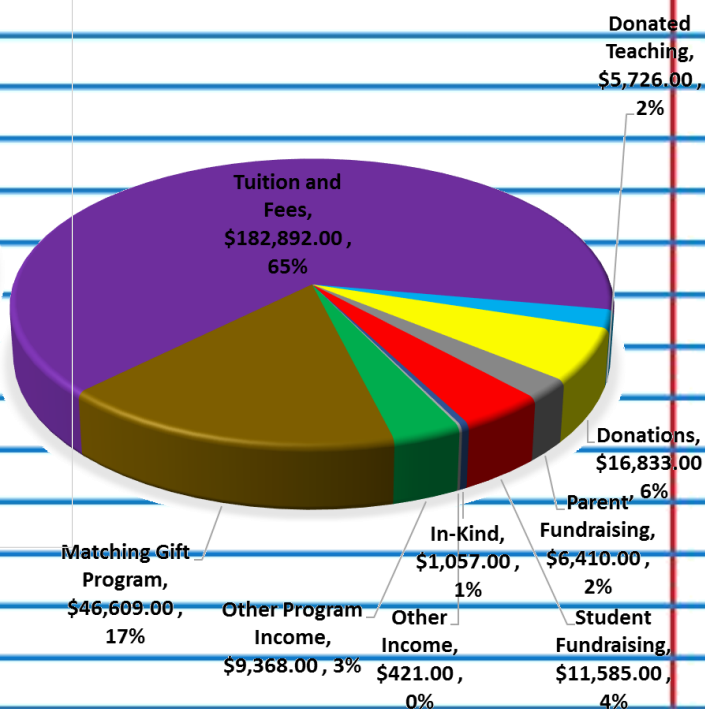
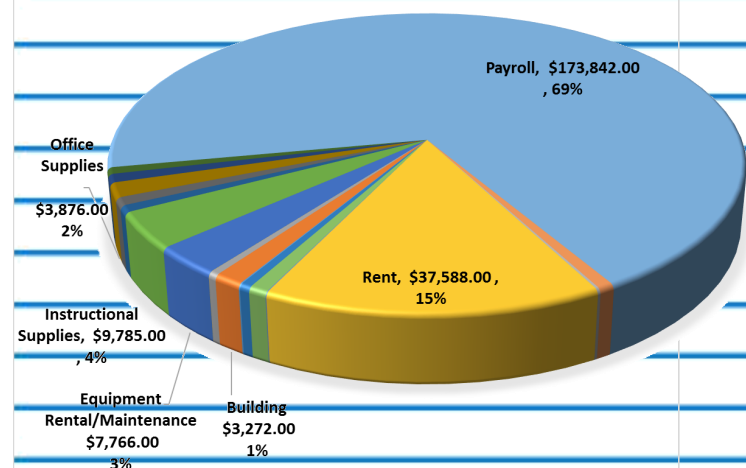
Income & Expenses 2012-2013

Income	\$280,901
Expense	\$250,721
Balance	\$30,180



EXPENSES 2012-2013

INCOME 2012-2013



Get in the Circle



Look at your hand. Imagine that the thumb, the appendage without which we would not exist as human beings, represents student fundraising. Yes, the thumb is the \$12,000 that students raise for their education through dinners, dances, coffeehouse, babysitting, making and selling t-shirts, and more.

You will notice that there remain 4 fingers which fill out the hand, making it the useful and artful tool we need to survive. Imagine that these 4 fingers are pledges made by the Matching Gift Circle members last year. Local businesses matched students' fundraising efforts an impressive 4:1.

Families at Youth Initiative pay a sliding scale of tuition, depending on their means. We make it possible for anyone who desires this education to be able to attain it. To do this, we depend on the support of our whole community. Our endowment is not in stocks and bonds, but in a wide circle of generous businesses and individuals who believe in Youth Initiative.

Join the Matching Gift Circle today For more information contact Shawn Lavoie, shawn@yihs.net

YIHS



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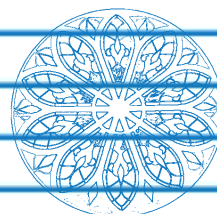
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