Responding to Violence with Compassion and Leadership

Summer 2016 was a challenging one, given the deeply disturbing events in Minneapolis, Dallas, Baton Rouge, and elsewhere in the month of July. However, thanks to the support and leadership of Phillips Academy administration, program leaders, and (MS)² students, our community grew closer and stronger than ever.

I am grateful to Beth Friedman, who joined PA as director of outreach and Summer Session on July 1. She quickly recognized the experience and familiarity that second- and third-year (MS)² students have with Andover and invited them to form a student council. Each week she met with the African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Native American student representatives to hear their concerns and gather input on how to address students’ sadness and anger and provide responsive programming.

On the weekend of Cultural Sharing, the (MS)² Advisory Council returned to campus to begin a strategic planning dialogue. I am thankful for their conversations with faculty and staff about what (MS)² is doing well, how the program can improve, and what we hope to accomplish in the future. I am also pleased to announce that, earlier that week, Beth Parsons joined PA as associate director of museums and outreach. Beth will help (MS)² achieve its fundraising goals and work with me in supporting our advisory council.

Finally, I am indebted to our 112 (MS)² scholars for their compassion and leadership. Together, they organized a candlelight vigil for the entire Andover summer community. Their heartfelt words—spoken at the vigil, expressed at Cultural Sharing, and written in the sidewalk drawings—were an inspiration to me and every other member of the community.

P.S. My name has changed! I am delighted to share the news that I got married in November 2015 to Willy Burgos from Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic, and we now live on the Phillips Academy campus.

Dianne Domenech-Burgos
Cultural Sharing

Coming Together for Community Healing

Violence perpetrated by and against police and the bombings at a Turkish airport were among the traumatic events in July that caused feelings of sadness, confusion, isolation, and anger. (MS)²'s annual Cultural Sharing, held July 16, was a well-timed and much-needed outlet for student expression—and an opportunity for unity and healing.

Tang Theatre was packed for the performances. “Our emotions that evening were very jumbled,” said Elijah Keeswood, one of the Native American leaders. “Our main objective was to share our perspectives, to show the struggle of being a minority and how we wish it could be.”

Jayla Langford, who represented African American students, told fellow students that they are all destined for greatness. “Despite all of the stereotypes, racism, and struggles that we face, we can make it through all the obstacles that come our way.”

“Knowing how hard we worked to create this environment of positivity and learning as well as a night full of fun gave me a feeling of happiness,” said Jorge Barrios, a leader of the Hispanic/Latino contingent. “I wanted every person in that crowd to understand the underlying message in each performance so we can defeat the misinformed hate and bias toward people of color and replace that with acceptance, kindness, and knowledge of other peoples’ lifestyles and hardships.”

This was the first Cultural Sharing attended by Beth Friedman, the new director of outreach and Summer Session. “It was truly inspiring,” she said. “The messages of hope for the future and belief in the power of traditionally underrepresented populations to rise above the low expectations society puts on them were something I’ll carry with me for a long time. In so many ways, the event exemplified the best of what this program can be and how—when we turn over the reins to our students—they soar.”

Putting Faces to the Names of (MS)² Fort Worth

The vast majority of donors to Phillips Academy and its outreach programs are alumni or parents of alumni—but not Ed Schollmaier and his wife, Rae (who, sadly, passed away in fall 2015). In fact, their son attended rival school Phillips Exeter! Ed Schollmaier is a rare breed—a genuine philanthropist who supports initiatives he deems worthy, irrespective of whether or not he has a personal connection.

When the Texan couple first learned about (MS)² in 1984 from their friend Mollie Lupe Lasater ’56, a future Phillips Academy trustee, they were impressed with the program’s mission. Since then, the Schollmaiers have contributed more than $300,000 to support (MS)² scholars from Fort Worth, Texas.

On May 20, 2016, Schollmaier attended an (MS)² welcome reception in Fort Worth for entering and current (MS)² students and (MS)² alumni. For the first time, he met numerous recipients of his longtime philanthropy. Schollmaier was clearly delighted—as were the many students, parents, and alumni who expressed their gratitude and chatted about what the program has meant to them.

A stranger no more, Schollmaier has finally “put faces to the names” of the long list of students he and his wife have so generously supported. Approximately 40 people attended the event at BNSF Railway headquarters, which was arranged and hosted by Lynn Harth Baldwin, (MS)² ’80, MIT graduate, and (MS)² Advisory Council member.

Donor Highlight

From left, Bernice Middleton, (MS)² ’95; Shamarah Batts-Palmer, (MS)² ’94; and Angelee Arthur, (MS)² ’95, express their gratitude to benefactor Ed Schollmaier, longtime friend of (MS)².

At the conclusion of the Cultural Sharing performance, Jorge Barrios, (MS)² ’16, encouraged members of the Andover community “to become the change that this world needs.”

“We wanted to let people know that if we all stick together we can get through the tough times.”

—Christopher Rorex, (MS)² ’16
Graduate Spotlight

When Carissa Sherman first applied to (MS)², she lived on the Navajo reservation in Glendale, Ariz., with her parents and younger brother. Her family later moved to Washington, where she became a high honors student at Kent-Meridian High School; she was also a high honors student all three summers at (MS)². “Carissa is one of the hardest workers I have ever had the pleasure to teach,” said Mike Geiwitz, her second-year science teacher. “It’s students like her that keep me coming back to Andover each summer.” Another instructor described Carissa as “kind and humble” and “passionate about her academic growth.”

Her mother’s blindness taught Carissa to have respect for all people and sparked an interest in the STEM fields. “My first year at (MS)², I wanted to become a geneticist or a genetic counselor,” said Carissa. “Now I’m thinking about becoming a math teacher on the reservation to get other kids interested in STEM. I tutor math and history, and I love the feeling when someone finally understands a difficult problem or topic, when their eyes slowly light up and they smile.”

“I have gained more confidence in myself from the teachers, staff, and other students at (MS)²,” she says. “Mr. G, my physics teacher, told me that I can go far, and my peers always encourage each other to try our best. We all want the same thing, and all of us have it in our reach: a bright, successful future.”

“(MS)² taught me how to prioritize my studies and take advantage of available resources.”

Carissa Sherman, (MS)² ’16

Program director Dianne Domenech-Burgos is pictured above with the graduates.

Alexis Angulo
Brooklyn, NY

Deshawn Armstrong
Chicago, IL

Alpha Bah
Acworth, GA

Jorge Barrios
Chicago, IL

Terrell Calabaza
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Jayla Langford
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Aniya Martinez
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Korey McReeves
Flagstaff, AZ

Leia Mermijo-Varga
Santa Fe, NM

Maria Orduño
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Martin Pineda
Chicago, IL

Esther Reyes
Brooklyn, NY

Aron Rezene
Washington, D.C.

Jolynn Robbins
Tuba City, AZ

Kierra Rogers
Louisville, KY

Christopher Rorex
Austell, GA

Sammy Santana
Lawrence, MA

Carissa Sherman
Kent, WA

Tawny Tate
Memphis, TN

Brooklyn, NY

Priya Jones
Bronx, NY

Elijah Keesswood
Albuquerque, NM

Jayla Langford
Louisville, KY

Aniya Martinez
Cleveland, OH

Korey McReeves
Flagstaff, AZ

Leia Mermijo-Varga
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Pierre Jones
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Elijah Keesswood
Albuquerque, NM

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Tuba City, AZ

Kierra Rogers
Louisville, KY

Christopher Rorex
Austell, GA

Thank You! For six years, Sharyn Bahn, major gift officer for educational outreach, put her heart and soul into raising funds and securing scholarship endowments for PA’s four outreach programs. Her retirement in May didn’t stop her from returning to campus for Cultural Sharing, which she described as “amazing and deeply moving.” Thank you, Sharyn, for your deep commitment and boundless enthusiasm.
Students are always excited to learn more about STEM careers at our annual career fair, which would not be possible without the participation of (MS)² alumni and friends.

If you work in STEM, please consider participating in our next career fair on July 13, 2017. Simply contact Carolyn Zimmer at czimmer@andover.edu.

We’d love to hear from you!

Donors for 2016 Program Year

We thank our generous donors for making a positive difference in the lives of talented and deserving African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Native American high school students.

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