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research

AIM

2013-2014 ANNUAL REPORT

reading rope
school
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opportunity



Because of You...



As we reflect on another successful year at AIM, we wanted to thank each of our donors whose unyielding support is reflected in our annual report. Your generosity has allowed our dedicated and passionate educators and staff to continue their work of providing extraordinary opportunities for the students at AIM Academy. It has allowed our staff to attend research based conferences, advance their education degrees and enabled us to continue to improve the faculty and staff's benefits as well as provide much needed scholarship support to so many amazing students.



We are often reminded of a statement of one of our mentors, Dr. Marianne Wolf from Tufts University, "Each child who cannot read diminishes society." Our students have so many talents and gifts and it is an honor to watch them flourish on a daily basis under the guidance of our amazing staff. We thank you for helping AIM make this happen.



Your support has also allowed us to impact our local community by training over 3,500 educators. How amazing is it that the AIM model for literacy will be implemented in two Philadelphia School District elementary schools in the fall! This is a dream come true for so many of our faculty and staff.

Contributions from 100% of our faculty and staff, 100% from our Board of Trustees, as well as significant contributions from the entire community including our generous AIM families and friends, have helped make such a difference. We hope you will continue to help us keep the dreams alive for so many children. AIM will be forever grateful.

Pat
Pat Roberts
Executive Director

Nancy
Nancy Blair
Associate Director



AIM Academy students **Andrew Rosenstein '17** and **Sophia Gross '16** presented in May at TEDxSoleburySchool, a one-day event featuring inspirational students who shared their passions and ideas regarding key components of change and innovation. Sophia and Andrew's presentation *Difficulty into Success: The Story of Young Entrepreneurs* was powerful and discussed their journey to academic and business success. AIM is extremely proud that Andrew and Sophia were selected to discuss their business, *Opportunity Rise*, which was started as part of AIM's innovative *Startup Corps* program.



My how we've grown! On Wednesday, September 3, AIM Academy welcomed 280 students in grades 1-12 for the 2014-2015 school year. Our 101 Lower School students, 89 Middle School students, and 90 Upper School students who hail from over 78 zip codes across the tri-state area, are all looking forward to an amazing year of Innovative Teaching, Fearless Learning, and Boundless Futures.



Building a Campus for Today and Tomorrow



All of us at AIM are extremely excited about the new AIM Community Center that will complete the campus and enhance the experience of our students, families, and the education community in the Greater Philadelphia region. Because of the investment and vision of core leadership donors and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, today we are halfway to our fundraising goal and able to break ground this fall. Together, with the help of the entire incredible AIM community and friends, we will raise the rest of these funds. We hope that you will be part of this legacy for AIM and our students' boundless futures!

In eight years AIM has grown from 24 students in a small building in Manayunk to 280 students and over 100 faculty and staff in a dynamic 60,000 square foot campus along the Schuylkill River

AIM is delighted to have received a \$1.5 million RACP (Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program) grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. RACP is administered by the Pennsylvania Office of the Budget for the acquisition and construction of regional economic, cultural, civic, recreational, and historical improvement projects. AIM is proud to be the only entity in Montgomery County to receive a grant in the most recent round.

This amazing 23,000 square foot community center, to be constructed at the east end of the campus, will add more space and much needed facilities for AIM students, faculty and families. The 500 seat auditorium will enable AIM drama, parent programs and graduation to be held on campus! Students will now be able to have an all weather facility for fitness and recreation. Enhanced learning will take place in the additional classrooms and centers.

In addition, the AIM Community Center will be the epicenter for the AIM Institute for Learning and Research, offering state-of-the-

art training to educators throughout the region and the globe. The 500-seat auditorium will expand access to these programs.

We appreciate the great generosity, vision and belief in AIM's innovative teaching, fearless learning and boundless futures that have brought us to this exciting moment in AIM history! We look forward to coming together for the milestone groundbreaking later this fall!



How We Spent Our Summer "Vacation"

AIM Academy faculty and staff members have traveled the world this summer for professional development and are bringing back new experiences, information and materials to share with AIM students, faculty and community.



AIM Faculty members **Chris Herman**, Head of the Upper School, and **Rick Castorani**, Director of Technology, presented *Delete Dyslexia: Technology tools that support children with language-based learning differences* at the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) 2014 Conference & Expo in Atlanta, in late June. ISTE is globally recognized as the most comprehensive educational technology conference of its kind. The interactive session covered a wide range of technologies, used specifically for children with dyslexia, that are easily mapped back to research-based theoretical frameworks for receptive and expressive language. Rick and Chris interacted with well over 500 educators, administrators, and policy makers from around the country and around the world.

Mike Dunn attended a program at University of Montana with the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. While the core focus of this seminar was content knowledge about Lewis and Clark, the 30+ teacher attendees were also engaged in critical discussions surrounding literacy instruction in content area classrooms. Specifically, Mike was engaged with his colleagues in examining how to use primary sources more effectively, strategies for infusing expository text into content choices, and the effective teaching of literacy in history courses.



We wish that we could list more of the great student experiences but here are a few:

Karoline '16 completed her studies as a Summer Scholar in the Templeton Honors College at Eastern University! She was selected for this prestigious program, received 3 college credits and had an amazing experience in this rigorous program focusing on skills of thinking, analysis, discussion, and writing with the Templeton Honors College's faculty. Karoline was able to enjoy one-to-one college-level academic tutorials, cultural trips and much more.



Sophia '16 attended the Technology Student Association (TSA) National Conference in Maryland. Sophia and her group placed 6th in the On Demand Video event at this intense nationwide competition. This was a unique team competition that required participants to compile a binder and film a short video in a few days onsite. For 2014 the challenge was to utilize a water bottle, a shoelace, and the phrase "Does that Thing Really Work?" in the video.



Allison Gubanich was one of 25 teachers selected nationwide for a summer fellowship at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC. In this prestigious program teachers collaborated with scholars, master teachers, fellow educators, as well as the Folger Collection, on Shakespeare works. The focus was on Romeo and Juliet and Twelfth Night with an emphasis on technology.



Allison and the other fellows had full access to the Folger Reading Rooms and priceless collections. She worked with her team to create digital learning objects that will be made available to humanities teachers across the country, while experiencing the plays together as researchers, performers, and educators.

Anthony '15 was invited as a media member at the 2014 NBA Draft in Brooklyn, New York on June 26 covering all 30 teams. Anthony covers sports year round as a New York Giants Beat Writer for *The Bronx Times*, New York Liberty Writer for *The Epoch Times*, and Writer/Reporter for the Philadelphia Soul of the Arena Football League.



Because of You...

Opportunities for Boundless Futures!

Approximately one-fifth of Annual Fund dollars raised in the past year were dedicated to the enhancement of the **AIM STEAM, Robotics and Engineering** programs, a move that has been enthusiastically received by students, faculty and families. AIM is a champion of STEAM—adding ART to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math—recognizing it as an integral part of the curriculum across all grades. May 2014 saw the culmination of the whole AIM community initiative with the inaugural **STEAM Faire**. Students, faculty and staff in Lower, Middle and Upper School were excited to share their hard work and creations with over 250 AIM families and friends. Look for the second annual AIM STEAM Faire in May 2015.



Starting with a **3D printer** that students and faculty built from a kit, a variety of amazing items have been ardently designed and created every school day. The newest acquisition, thanks to several donors, is a **laser engraver** that will enable students to envision, design, and produce their creations. In addition, the AIM Startup Corps students will collaborate for new business ventures now possible with this outstanding piece of equipment.

Over 12% of Annual Fund dollars support **AIM Arts and Drama**, an important part of the AIM experience. In May 2014, AIM Academy Drama Club presented three performances of **The Music Man** by Meredith Wilson. The performances took place at the Arts Bank Theater at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. **Fifty-five AIM students in grades 6 through 12 - Middle and Upper School- were in the cast and on the crew** for this classic Broadway and screen musical. Talented AIM Faculty members Maryanne Yoshida, Emily Bolles, Kristen Seavey and Emily Pritchard directed and oversaw the outstanding AIM production that was produced through a special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). The AIM Drama Club will present two productions in the 2014-15 school year - a drama in the fall and a spring musical.



College preparation is another area that benefits from your generosity to the AIM Annual Fund. AIM college counselors meet frequently with high school students to help them identify their affinities, strengths, and goals for college and beyond. During this process, self-advocacy skills necessary for life beyond high school are developed and refined. Institutions of higher learning are identified for each AIM student that meet his or her personal, academic and professional goals. AIM strives to find colleges that align with each of our student's unique learning styles, intellectual gifts and areas of affinity, as part of the AIM Four Threads for the Future. In addition,

AIM Academy partners with Cabrini College. Our seniors become dual enrolled and receive up to six credits per year. AIM also offers unique college preparation courses in partnership with Chestnut Hill Educational Services. **The results for the first three AIM graduating classes include an impressive list of college acceptances and excellent merit-based academic scholarships.** AIM looks forward to the success of the Class of 2015 and their opportunities for college and beyond!

Thank you for making a difference and your role in creating boundless futures for AIM students now and for generations to follow!



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On behalf of the Board, faculty, staff, and especially the students and families of AIM Academy, we wish to acknowledge the outstanding generosity of the following individuals, businesses, and foundations who through their support have enabled AIM to make a difference in the lives of children who learn differently and their educators throughout the Greater Philadelphia region. Gifts have been made from July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014 unless otherwise noted.

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Because of You...

Leading the Way in Teacher Training

Through the **AIM Institute for Learning and Research** the Philadelphia area has access to a global multidisciplinary service delivery center, which brings the latest research and educational training opportunities to parents, teachers and therapists who work with children with learning differences including dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia and ADHD. To date, over 3,500 educators throughout the Delaware Valley and all over the world have received training through AIM.

AIM is proud to have the support of leading foundations, corporations and donors to expand training and professional development opportunities for teachers in the Delaware Valley. **Shire USA**, the **Brook J. Lenfest Foundation**, and the **Hamilton Family Foundation** are among these leaders who support the critical work of the AIM Institute. And again, your Annual Fund dollars play a role, by enabling AIM Academy faculty to log approximately 1,500 training hours annually and stay abreast of the latest research and best practices.

An important partnership to expand the reach of the AIM Institute is the Brook J. Lenfest Teacher Training Scholarship Fund. Through this generous support, AIM is empowered to investigate, develop, and disseminate evidence-based instruction in the field of learning disabilities to educators, parents, and urban and suburban schools and school districts with low and moderate-income students with learning disabilities. Beneficiaries of this fund must demonstrate a commitment to teacher training in the top research-based approaches to assist children in reaching their academic potential. AIM also partners with the Hamilton Family Foundation to provide support for the training of teachers serving economically underserved children and youth.

Through the support of Shire USA, annual AIM Institute programming such as the outstanding Access to the Experts speaker series and Research to Practice Symposium are possible. These programs bring globally renowned researchers and experts in the field of early literacy and learning differences to this region to share their insights. AIM's second annual Research-to-Practice



Experts pictured with Pat Roberts (far right) and Nancy Blair (second from left) who presented at AIM's second annual **Research to Practice Symposium** include (l to r) **Nancy Hennessy, M. Ed. of AIM Academy; Ken Pugh, Ph.D. of Haskins Laboratories at Yale University; Louisa Moats, Ed. D. an independent researcher and consultant; and Timothy Odegard, Ph.D. of Wilson Language Training.**

Symposium, Listen to the Voices of Language, Literacy, and Mathematics Research was held in March 2014. This invitation-only gathering provided a rare opportunity for some of education's most innovative experts to meet and trade ideas with 100 education policy makers from across the Commonwealth. In bringing together influencers in the field of education, AIM has initiated a broader, ongoing dialogue about how to best improve area schools and student achievement by ensuring that the latest research in reading and math gets into classrooms quickly and efficiently. The third annual Symposium will be held at AIM on March 16, 2015.

AIM Welcomes Lindsey Boden, Director of Enrollment Management and Financial Aid

Lindsey M. Boden, Ed.M. joins AIM Academy as Director of Enrollment Management and Financial Aid. A graduate of Harvard University Graduate School of Education, Lindsey has over ten years experience as an educational consultant and a psychoeducational evaluator and seven years experience in independent school admissions. She brings a unique blend of comprehensive knowledge about learning differences/disabilities and psychological assessment with broad understanding of best practices in enrollment management and admissions in the evolving independent school marketplace.

Karen Keesey will continue in her role as Director of Admissions and Educational Outreach. Allison Bedrosian will serve as the Admissions Associate, assisting in all areas of admissions and working closely with AIM faculty, staff and families. Rounding out the team are Beth Santangelo, Director of Student Accounts and Outreach, and Carlisa Wicks, Administrative Assistant.



Meet the Academic Leadership Team



Grace Ashton
Assistant Head of AIM Academy

Grace will lead AIM Academy's Academic Leadership Team. Working closely with Pat Roberts and Nancy Blair, Grace has been integral to the development of AIM since its founding in 2006. Previously serving as Director of AIM's Integrated Services Team, which includes the areas of Speech and Language, Occupational

Therapy and Psychological Services, Grace has directed the incorporation of Executive Functioning Skills Coaching, Cogmed Working Memory Training, and the full integration of all these services to provide the optimal academic experience for each AIM student.



Ed Gallagher
Head of Middle School

Ed comes to AIM's newly created Head of Middle School position from Girard College where he served as Assistant Upper School Dean since 2010. He is a Girard College alumnus and also served as the Director of Girard College Summer Reach, a classroom teacher, and athletic coach. Ed's practical experience, strong academic background

and 21st Century approach to academic excellence are an ideal fit to lead the faculty and programming for grades 6-8.



Allison Enslein
Head of Lower School

Allison will oversee the faculty and programming of grades 1-5. Allison was formerly the Head of School at the Center School in Abington and holds a Master's Degree in Special Education/Learning Disabilities and an undergraduate degree in Elementary Education. Allison

is a fervent advocate for children who learn differently and is committed to ensuring that every child develops a love of learning and experiences success in the classroom.



Chris Herman
Head of Upper School

Chris has been an essential part of the AIM team since the school's inception. He is one of the architects of AIM's *Four Threads for the Future* curricula which allow Middle School and Upper School students to tap into their special talents and passions, pursue their personal interests while preparing for college and beyond in ways

that no conventional school program can match. While leading the faculty and programming of grades 9-12, Chris is also a frequent speaker on learning disabilities, literacy, and educational technology for audiences throughout the country.

Rounding Out This Incredible Team Are:

Erin DeVault, Director of Speech and Language; Melissa Hoerdeman, Director of Occupational Therapy; Dee Castorani, Director of Community and Engagement; and Jenna Bonshock, Director of Athletics and Student Life. AIM, with our continued focus on evidence-based, arts-infused curriculum and practice, benefits from the expertise of **Kris McGuirk, Education Director and Director of Wilson Practice** and **Nancy Hennessy, Director of Professional Practice Instruction.** These outstanding educators will continue to support the **Academic Leadership Team.**



SAVE THE DATE

for the AIM Academy 7th Annual

AIM for the Stars ★ Gala

Thursday Evening, November 6, 2014 at the Sheraton Valley Forge Hotel

Honoring

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Jerry Pinkney

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