



*Innovative teaching,
fearless learning.*



2012-2013 ANNUAL REPORT

AIM ACADEMY—INNOVATIVE TEACHING, FEARLESS LEARNING AND *BOUNDLESS FUTURES!*

As we reflect upon the last remarkable seven years, we want to express our deep appreciation to all of you who have made it possible for AIM Academy's growth and accomplishments. Your generosity, vision and belief in the AIM mission have taken us from **24 students in Manayunk to 240 students in a magnificent 60,000 square foot campus** along the Schuylkill.

At AIM, bright students flourish through a **highly rigorous, academic approach** that incorporates civics, geography, history and literature in an arts-based environment. **The focus is on the individual student, celebrating their unique talents and interests and fostering confidence and a love of learning.** AIM teachers are dedicated to understanding best practices in their field and have logged over 1,500 hours in professional development that have a direct impact on the education we offer to our students. To date, AIM has also **provided teacher training to over 3,000 educators and parents through the AIM Institute for Learning and Research.**

And as we celebrate the many accomplishments of the past year, all of us at AIM are excited for this upcoming school year and beyond. We are extremely grateful for the leadership support which is enabling our Upper School expansion. **The Innovation Wing will now house the new AIM Physics Lab as well as the enhanced Robotics Lab.**

At AIM we are champions of STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math education. Adding Art to STEM results in **STEAM** and AIM is very excited about the inclusion of STEAM education to its curriculum. From Legos to underwater robots to building, programming and competing with their own remote control creations, AIM's innovative **Robotics Program** is a model of AIM's STEAM curriculum—exploring science, technology, engineering, arts and math.



We are also excited about the enhancements to the **AIM Athletics Program** with more sports and teams and the wonderful community response to the spectacular **state of the art athletic field and playground**



complex. Academic and intellectual development is enhanced by an array of extracurricular activities and enrichment in the arts, athletics and community service. At AIM Academy, we believe creative and physical outlets are hallmarks of the learning experience. We know that opportunities to engage in the creative and performing arts have an indelible impact on a student's confidence, and build camaraderie and perseverance. We also know that physical activity has been proven to lead to gains in academic achievement.

To help fulfill our dual mission to provide extraordinary educational opportunities and to develop into a center for educational excellence and professional development, we are establishing the multi-functional **AIM Recreation and Arts Center.** The nearly 14,000 square-foot building at the east end of the campus will include construction of a **full scale basketball court, conditioning facility, wellness and nutrition classrooms, expanded arts area for set design and woodworking as well as an auditorium that will accommodate 500 people.**



At AIM we are always looking ahead with gratitude and appreciation for all of you who have made AIM Academy a reality. Together, we are extremely excited about the next stage in our students' and AIM's boundless future!

With best wishes,

Pat Roberts

Nancy Blair

FOUR THREADS FOR THE FUTURE

AIM Academy has always been committed to helping bright children with language-based learning differences blossom into fearless readers, intrepid writers and voracious learners with boundless futures. Now we are going even further with **Four Threads for the Future**.

AIM has created unique curricula for late Middle School and Upper School Students that allow them 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. Students choose one or more curricular threads as the backbone of their high school career. All threads include electives, extra-curricular activities, travel, internships, special programs with area universities and much more. The AIM Threads are:

Innovation & Entrepreneurship

This thread is about cultivating the next generation of innovative thinkers and business leaders. Through entrepreneurial endeavors including Innovation Labs, Startup Corps, and work with public/private sector partners, AIM students watch their ideas come to fruition and their visions come to life.

Sustainability & Global Competency

Students following this thread explore environmental responsibility, have broad opportunities for travel, advanced studies in foreign language, and focus their attention on the value of other cultures. They explore pressing global issues including water management and poverty through creative problem solving activities.

21st Century Skills

Science & Engineering

The challenge, purpose, and realities of Science and Engineering come to life in this thread. Students apply their scientific learning in expanded work with robotics, engineering and various lab-based scientific endeavors. Our newly renovated Science & Engineering Wing welcomes them with cutting-edge lab spaces for work in Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Robotics, and the Global Sciences. Students following this thread are challenged with additional lab work, advanced Robotics classes and engineering competitions.

Arts & Design

Daniel Pink notes in his book, *A Whole New Mind*, individuals with talent in design will rule the future. AIM Art & Design students will pursue their arts passions in the Marvin N. Demchick and Marvin D. Alloy Arts & Design Wing. Courses include 2D Studio Arts, 3D Sculpture and Ceramics, Drama, Music Theory, Vocal, Instrumental, Animation, Video Production, Photography, and more. Students in this thread develop comprehensive and impressive portfolios.

AIM ADVANTAGE - ENSURING COLLEGE SUCCESS

For all students, being successful during their first year of college is a daunting task. They enter a complex college system and are expected to balance time management, study skills, dense readings, essays, library research, deans, registrars, and much more.



The AIM Advantage, established in 2012, provides weekly sessions in person or via Skype for AIM alumni with an AIM College Coach to **ensure that they are using the strategies they developed at AIM and building successful college habits**. Together, the coach and the student generate a time schedule, analyze upcoming assignments, and talk about each course. These meetings allow the

AIM College Coach to both track each student's progress and give them a better sense of what needs to be accomplished.

Key to the AIM Advantage mission of *Confirming College Success* is **building strong habits that the students can carry with them throughout their college years and beyond**.

This innovative AIM program is a reality through the vision and generosity of **the Villari family**. **Jake Villari '12 and his parents Pete and Jeanine** represent the power of family. The path to success for our students is a journey of passion and perseverance. And like any goal to be attained, that path requires hard work and the support of others. Through a generous multi-year donation by the Villari family, we were able to launch the AIM Advantage program for AIM alumni. We are extremely grateful to the Villaris for this wonderful gift and appreciate that they are passionate believers in the power of education and the mission of AIM.

AIM STUDENTS TRAVEL THE GLOBE

For Middle and Upper School students at AIM Academy, travel plays an important role in making rich connections to the curriculum and contributing to a wealth of background knowledge. A sample of AIM travel in the 2012-13 school year includes:

AIM's 8th graders experienced a week-long trip to the **Teton Science School in the Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming**. AIM students were exposed to a host of new experiences and natural phenomena, including cross-country skiing, snow-shoeing, and walking across a frozen glacial lake. The students also saw rare wildlife up close, such as moose, coyotes, big-horned sheep, bald eagles, falcons, and owls. This incredible trip provided AIM students the opportunity to practice vital learning skills and create lifelong memories while experiencing firsthand the science of the natural world.

AIM collaborated with **Imagine Science Foundation** for an amazing Upper School trip to **Costa Rica** where a dozen students traveled to experience the culture, environment, food and adventure of this Central American country. Students happily embraced the opportunities to learn about monkeys, birds, sloths, crocodiles, butterflies, turtles, and much more. The group also watched water-walking lizards bask in the sun, learned some Spanish, played a challenging

soccer game against an indigenous Costa Rican tribe known as the Bri Bri people and much more. They spent quality time at the Sea Turtle Research Station patrolling the beach at night watching for large female sea turtles to come up on the beach to lay her eggs. AIM students also had the opportunity to participate in many adventure based activities such as zip-lining through the forest, river rafting down class 2 and 3 rapids, hiking through bat filled caves, snorkeling on a coral reef and more. This trip provided an amazing opportunity for students to be stretched outside their comfort zone, to travel internationally, to face some of their fears and to become immersed in a new culture.

AIM juniors and seniors traveled to **New Orleans** in March 2013 for an enriching and highly academic experience. Over the six months prior to the trip each student was engaged in a series of research projects and presentations in preparation for their on-site study. While in New Orleans each student presented two on-site five-minute talks about the significant people and places of the City. To keep the stakes high, each talk was also attended by a group of people recruited from the street. The ability to speak with your index cards in your pocket and make sense of your knowledge to strangers is a sign of true learning. Another trip highlight was the AIM students being honored with a special proclamation from the New Orleans City Council.



AIM DRAMA PRESENTS GREASE!

In May 2013 AIM presented a spectacular production of **Grease** at the Arts Bank Theater at the University of the Arts. This was an amazing display of talent, enthusiasm and commitment of AIM students both in the cast and on the crew. A record number of talented AIM students in grades 6-12 shone in three sold out performances in this incredible professional theater. Thanks to Maryanne Yoshida, Emily Bolles, Emily Pritchard and all other supporting AIM faculty, staff and families for making this production so memorable! It takes a village to produce a quality production and AIM's Drama Club looks forward to working together for the next AIM spring musical.

"Grease: School Version" was presented by special arrangement with SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP SHINES AT AIM

AIM's focus on entrepreneurial studies and talent development inspires our Upper School students to make connections, develop creative problem-solving abilities and follow their interests and talents. **Startup Corps is student-centered, market based and aimed to be transformative.** Music labels, neighborhood cleanup projects, a restaurant, and software development companies are just some of the student-led initiatives that have resulted from this program. While each outcome is unique, most students learn that **nurturing an idea from concept to reality is hard work, but achievable with motivation and a supportive network.**

In March fourteen AIM Middle and Upper School students presented their entrepreneurial ventures to a panel of judges. From an investment club to web sites that inspire teens to t-shirts that give back to tech support for all ages and much more, AIM young entrepreneurs wowed the packed room with their creativity, ingenuity, and drive. All were winners that night, but one student, **Nathan Batzer '16**, received the highest score for his customized surf board fin business. He won a \$250 investment in his startup and a place in the Philadelphia area finals. On March 18, as one of five finalists representing the 105 students from across Philadelphia, Nathan became the 2013 champion winning



an additional \$1,000 grant toward his new venture. Mayor Michael Nutter was on hand to congratulate Nathan on this great achievement.

The AIM awards continued with **Hallel Raphael '16** named as **Entrepreneur of the Year** at the Startup Corps Youth Entrepreneurship Expo at Temple University in May. In addition she was selected to join the Startup team as a paid mentor and intern for summer 2013.



HOME FIELD ADVANTAGE ENHANCES AIM ATHLETICS

AIM celebrated the opening of its outstanding new athletic field and a brightly colored playground with basketball hoops, swings, climbing equipment and creative play areas.

AIM students experience full immersion into a world of creativity, rigorous academics, arts, and athletics. The field, playground, and other capital improvements—made to keep pace with the growing enrollment—were funded by private contributors as well as a \$1.5 million grant from Pennsylvania's Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP).

AIM Middle and Upper School students compete in a variety of sports each season. There are opportunities for interscholastic competition, intramural and individual sports including:

Cross Country
Soccer
Volleyball
Basketball
Flag Football
Lacrosse

Golf
Tennis
Crew
Cheerleading
Equestrian



On behalf of the Board, faculty, staff, and especially the students 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, 2012-June 30, 2013 unless otherwise noted.

ANNUAL FUND

Annual gifts from the AIM community to support the day to day pursuit of excellence in the education of students who learn differently and their educators.

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Please accept our sincere apology if we have mistakenly overlooked or misspelled your name or the name of your business or organization. We hope you will let us know of any error by contacting AIM Development at 215-483-2461.

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(continued on Page 8)

AIM for the Stars Gala – November 8, 2012 (continued)

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Gifts to support the education of AIM students including those from businesses participating in the Pennsylvania Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program and the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program.

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From Teacher Training to the AIM Advantage Program for continued success for AIM graduates to iPads, robotics kits, and field trips to experience the world firsthand, these donors have contributed to an outstanding learning experience for AIM students and educators.

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Donors who have made contributions this year to the future of AIM Academy through our endowment fund.

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AIM FOR THE FUTURE² CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

We appreciate the following lead support received for the campaign to build the AIM Recreation and Arts Center.

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AIM ACADEMY ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

AIM Academy is pleased to announce that **Karen Keesey** has been named **Director of Admissions**. Karen has served as Assistant Director of Admissions for the past three years and has been instrumental in growing AIM's enrollment by more than 70% to the current number of 245 students. She has previously been director at a school for adolescent girls and has also been the manager of a successful staffing agency. Karen brings a unique background in education, business management and human resources to the AIM Admissions office. Karen leads AIM's newly formed Enrollment Management Team and will guide the strategic growth of AIM's student community to meet the needs of these bright, motivated students.



Joining Karen are **Tearson Morrison** and **Beth Santangelo**. Tearson was previously the Director of Admissions and Financial Aid for the Montgomery School in Chester Springs, PA, as well as the Student Affairs Coordinator. She brings five years of Independent School experience to the team as well as six years of experience as Director



of Operations for a private Preschool and Kindergarten, and ten years working in the developmental psychology field with children and adolescents. Tearson serves as **AIM Admissions Associate** and will work closely with the AIM faculty and staff and families.

Beth Santangelo rounds out the team with her background in education and finance. She worked in school administration at PA Virtual Charter School for five years developing, implementing and managing the Parent Ambassador Program providing training, mentoring, and professional development programs for enrolled families. Beth previously worked in both public accounting and private industry as a CPA specializing in emerging businesses. Beth serves as the **AIM Director of Student Accounts and Outreach**.



Karen, Tearson and Beth are happy to meet and share AIM's campus and mission with you. Please feel free to contact them to schedule a tour, address any questions or receive additional AIM information.

They can be reached by phone at 215-483-2461 or email at admissions@aimpa.org.

NANCY HENNESSY AND JOYCE REHORST JOIN AIM ACADEMY

AIM Academy welcomes **Nancy Hennessy, M.Ed.** as the **Director of Academic and Professional Practices** and **Joyce Rehorst** as the **Interim Head of Lower School**. They join our innovative learning environment for children with language-based learning differences.

Nancy Hennessy, M.Ed. is an educational consultant, author and past president of the International Dyslexia Association (IDA), as well as an experienced teacher and administrator. While in public schools, she provided leadership in the development of curriculum and innovative programming for special needs students, a statewide revision of special education code and an award winning professional development initiative. Nancy has delivered keynote addresses, workshops and training to educators nationally and internationally. She co-authored Module 6 of LETRS, *Digging for Meaning: Teaching Text Comprehension* (2nd edition) with Louisa Moats and the chapter, *Word Learning and Vocabulary Instruction*,



in *Multisensory Teaching of Basic Skills* (3rd edition). Nancy is a national trainer for Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS). She was recently inducted as an honorary member of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society, is the 2011 recipient of IDA's Margaret Rawson Lifetime Achievement Award and NCIDA's 2012 June Lyday Orton Award. Nancy also is a member of the AIM Academy Board of Trustees and serves on the AIM Research Advisory Board.

Joyce Rehorst has over twenty-five years experience in Independent Schools as a Teaching Professional, Curriculum Director, consultant and as Head of Lower School at both the Montgomery School in Chester Springs and Agnes Irwin School in Rosemont. Joyce earned her B.A. at Rosemont College and her M.Ed at Temple University. In addition, she has served on several Boards and is currently on the Advisory Board of St. James School in Philadelphia. She is a Certified Wilson Reading Specialist.



AIM INSTITUTE HOSTS 100 EDUCATION LEADERS FOR RESEARCH TO PRACTICE SUMMIT



AIM Academy hosted its first annual Research-to-Practice Symposium *Listen to the Voices of Language, Literacy, and Mathematics Research* on March 11, 2013. This invitation-only gathering provided a rare opportunity for some of education's most innovative experts to meet and trade ideas with 100 influential education policy makers from across Pennsylvania. By bringing together so many key individuals in the field of education, AIM hopes to start a broader, ongoing

dialogue about how to improve area schools and student achievement by ensuring that the latest research in reading and math gets into classrooms quickly and efficiently.

Inaugural presenters included Kate Cain, a leading language and cognitive development researcher at Lancaster University in the United Kingdom, Daniel Berch, professor

of Special Education and Applied Developmental Science at the University of Virginia, Ken Pugh of Haskins Lab at Yale University, and Barbara Wilson, co-founder of Wilson Language Training, a world-renowned teaching method. The symposium boasts equally impressive attendees representing area Schools of Education, multiple school districts including Philadelphia, policy makers from Harrisburg, and foundations and programs such as Maguire Foundation and Children's Literacy Initiative.

"The symposium was a way for educators and policy makers at all levels to begin the conversation of how to efficiently and effectively bring evidence-based research into the classroom. I was able to have discussions with district leaders and other researchers; we shared ideas of future collaborations. The School of Education at Drexel University looks forward to working collaboratively with the School District of Philadelphia, AIM Academy, and other area researchers to bring best practices to all levels of education." shared Dr. Lori Severino, Program Director of Special Education, Drexel University School of Education

The 2014 Research-to-Practice Symposium will be held at AIM on March 17.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE THROUGHOUT THE REGION — ANNOUNCING THE BROOK J. LENFEST TEACHER TRAINING SCHOLARSHIP FUND AT AIM

September 1, 2013 marked the launch of the **Brook J. Lenfest Teacher Training Scholarship Fund** to provide teacher training to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities through the **AIM Institute for Learning and Research** educator training program. Through the Institute, AIM is committed to investigate, develop, and disseminate information regarding 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. **This need-based fund is established through a generous grant from the Brook J. Lenfest Foundation.** AIM is honored to be able to partner with the Foundation to enhance the education opportunities throughout this region.

Partial scholarships up to 75% of total training fees not to exceed \$5,000 will be awarded to **schools or school districts demonstrating a commitment to teacher training in the top research-based approaches to assist children to reach their academic potential.** The student population benefiting from this training of their educators

and administrators must be in grades K through 12, and shown to be economically underserved such as over 70% eligible for free or reduced rate lunch. **Educators serving qualified schools within the Greater Philadelphia region are especially encouraged to apply.**

Scholarships will be awarded to support participation in training offered by the AIM Institute. Qualifying training opportunities include but are not limited to: **Wilson Language Training®, LETRS –Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling, RAVE-O, Making Math Real, and the Access to the Experts** speaker series.

Applications began to be accepted on September 1 at **www.aimpa.org**. In the initial year of this scholarship offering, 2013-2014, there will be rolling application review in order to accommodate the numerous inquiries for training. Thereafter, application deadlines will be September 15, December 1, February 15 and May 1 annually. Applications will be reviewed within two weeks following each deadline listed. Only online applications will be accepted.

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