



STUDENT LIFE AT AIM



MERIT SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED TO AIM CLASS OF 2012 EXCEED \$1,000,000!

AIM-Academy In Manayunk will be graduating its first high school class this June. The five seniors who are currently also enrolled in freshman courses at Cabrini College, have all been accepted into college – 20 so far and counting--and together have received offers of merit scholarships exceeding \$1,000,000.

College and University Acceptances Include:
Arcadia University, Cabrini College, Drexel University, Eastern University, Elizabethtown College, Gwynedd Mercy College, Harcum College, Immaculata College, La Salle University, Rosemont College, Saint Joseph's University, Seton Hall University, Washington College, Westminster College



Million Dollar seniors pictured left to right: Will Murphy, Jon Fuiman, Jake Villari, Charmaine Waddell, and Tess Alloy.



CREATING TOMORROW'S LEADERS AND CEO'S

In October, the cover story of *Suburban Life Main Line Magazine* was "Leadership Where It Counts – How AIM-Academy In Manayunk is leading the way in the education of students with learning differences and creating tomorrow's leaders and CEO's." The article featured AIM's unique blend of research-based curriculum based on the Common Core Standards in tandem with an arts-based learning environment designed to support creativity, innovation, and collaboration.

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AIM ~ ACADEMY IN MANAYUNK STATE OF THE SCHOOL WINTER 2012



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GREETINGS FROM AIM'S NEW HOME!

It is with great pride that we share with you these recent AIM highlights. Because of the passionate support of our Board, faculty, staff, families, and many friends, together the AIM community has accomplished much for students who learn differently and their educators. From welcoming the second lady of the United States, to moving into our new home in Conshohocken, PA, to the work of our inspiring students, faculty, and expert speakers, it is an exciting time for AIM. Please enjoy this Winter 2012 State of the School and a look into AIM's bright future!

Warmest regards,
Matt Naylor
Chair, Board of Trustees

Pat Roberts
Executive Director

Nancy Blair
Associate Director & Director of Admissions



A MILESTONE FOR PHILADELPHIA AREA STUDENTS WHO LEARN DIFFERENTLY: RIBBON CUTTING FOR AIM'S NEW HOME

On a beautiful, cold, blustery day, students, families, faculty, Board and friends of AIM-Academy In Manayunk joined hands to participate in the much anticipated Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for AIM's New River Park Campus on Tuesday, January 3, 2012. AIM Board Chair, Matt Naylor, presided at this momentous event with executive director Pat Roberts and associate director Nancy Blair marking the culmination of five years of focus on the mission of providing educational excellence to children who learn differently and to disseminating best practices to the teachers who teach them. On hand to officially cut the ribbon were Representative Mike Gerber of Montgomery County and Philadelphia City Councilman, Dennis O'Brien, a fitting team to demonstrate the importance of AIM as a resource for the city and suburbs of the Commonwealth of PA and beyond.

Blue and gold scissors were provided to all Leadership Donors of the AIM for the Future Capital Campaign including lead donors John and Franny Glomb, Jim and Frannie Maguire of the Maguire Foundation, Helene and Archie van Beuren,



Ellen Farber of the Farber Family Foundation, Mike Zisman and Linda Gamble, Berton E. Korman, AIM Board Members Jackie Allen, Matt Naylor, Sam Greenblatt, Marvin Demchick, and Marvin Alloy.

The first to ceremoniously step through the gleaming atrium entrance to the Glomb/Maguire Lobby were the very same AIM Seniors and their first grade buddies who walked through the doors of the last opening day in September of AIM in Manayunk. It was fitting that the Seniors hosted the first Buddy Read session with these First Graders to commemorate this day of celebration as one school under one roof for the common cause of literacy!

AIM RECEIVES PAIS ACCREDITATION

AIM is thrilled to announce that after an in-depth 18 month self study focused on excellence in education, the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools (PAIS) has awarded us its accreditation. PAIS accreditation assesses a school's congruence with its own mission and its compliance with PAIS standards. Thanks are due to AIM faculty, staff, parents, and Board who participated in this process. The PAIS Visiting Committee commended AIM for:

- The passion, commitment, and dedication of the faculty and staff.
- The community's outstanding focus on the mission statement.
- The level of organization and development of policies in the first five years.
- Its exemplary financial planning for sustainability.
- The creation of a positive school culture and learning environment.
- The development of strong academic partnerships with local colleges and universities.



DR. JILL BIDEN VISITS



The 4th Annual *AIM for the Stars* Gala took place on November 3rd at The Union League of Philadelphia. Second Lady of the United States and life-long educator **Dr. Jill Biden** shared remarks with the 370 guests consisting of parents, faculty, and supporters of AIM, as well as the **Honorable Edward G. Rendell, Mayor Michael Nutter**, and representatives from throughout the Greater Philadelphia education community.

AIM honored two outstanding individuals with the Sally L. Smith Founder's Award recognizing leadership in education and literacy for children who learn differently: **Philip Schultz**, a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet and author of the critically acclaimed memoir *My Dyslexia* where he shares his inspiring story of how a boy who did not learn how to read until he was eleven went on to become a prize winning poet by force of sheer determination; and **Tracy Johnson**, a native Philadelphian, who was not diagnosed with dyslexia until after a struggling grade school and high school experience. Her perseverance and drive to further her education led her to the Wilson Reading Program, Harcum College, Cabrini College, and now as both a Master's degree candidate and Enrollment Advisor at Eastern University.



The event raised over \$100,000 to benefit students who learn differently and their educators throughout the Greater Philadelphia region.



AIM FACULTY SHINE



AIM went global with its ever expanding demand for teacher training. Working with Wilson Language Corporation, AIM Education Director **Kris McGuirk** went to Portlaoise, Ireland in November to provide three days of Just Words® training to twenty-three teachers from as far north as Donegal and as south as County Cork.

The January issue of Dyslexia Connection, IDA's newsletter for parents, focused on the social and emotional challenges of children with learning differences. In an article titled, **Bullying and Learning Disabilities: A Double Jeopardy**, **Christy Barbone**, school psychologist at AIM, describes the risk factors and characteristics that make children and youth with LD particularly vulnerable to bullying.

LOOK WHO IS CHECKING OUT AIM

AIM students welcomed a rock star to their school this Fall—one that also had their parents and teachers begging for just a peek. Their rock star was **Barbara Wilson, founder of the Wilson Reading System®**. AIM is one of 24 Wilson Partner Schools in the U.S. utilizing and providing teacher training and ongoing coaching and support in the Wilson Reading System. AIM Lower School students (Grades 1-5) all participated in creating an incredible keepsake for Barbara Wilson. Pictured here, each student wrote on a feather-shaped sheet how Wilson has helped them to become stronger readers. The 'feathers' were then combined to form an owl—the symbol of the Wilson Reading System®.

On January 20, 2012, **State Senator Vincent Hughes** and his entire staff toured AIM which is now in his district. A highlight of the Senator's visit was one of our unique Academic Clubs -- Knights and Ladies -- where 4th grade students transported him back to Medieval times.

On January 26, AIM hosted a visit by a number of professionals from **Shire Pharmaceuticals**. Shire has a goal to fund education to improve the screening, diagnosis, treatment, and management of patients with ADHD. Our guests toured the school, learned about our extensive teacher training component, and met with parents and a student to hear how medicines can impact the learning experience of students with learning disabilities combined with ADHD. Representatives also presented to AIM Upper School students on the different career opportunities available at a company such as Shire.

AIM Director of Psychological Services **Dr. Grace Ashton** was invited by Pearson and Cogmed to present at the 2012 Cogmed Conference "Cognitive Training in Science & Practice: Exchanging Perspectives & Innovative Concepts" in Tampa, Florida in February. Dr. Ashton presented as part of the "Excellence in Clinical Implementation" session on Cogmed Working Memory Training with students with Language Based Learning Disabilities.

AIM Director of Technology **Rick Castorani** and Upper School Coordinator **Chris Herman** have been invited to present at the ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education) Annual Conference in San Diego in June. Their presentation, Deleting Dyslexia focuses on using technology as the ultimate equalizer in High School and College Level education. Their talk will emphasize the successful use of technology in the transition of AIM students as they head off to college.

