

University of Chicago Parents' Association



**University of Chicago Laboratory Schools
Parents' Association (PA) plays a vital role in
creating a sense of community and supporting
the mission of the school.**

**This past year, PA Board members and volunteers
greatly contributed to building an engaged school
environment and promoting academic success.
This Annual Report highlights our achievements in 2021-2022.**

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The Year in Review



Dear Parents,

What a year we have had! All students and faculty returned to full time on-campus learning and all of us found new ways of being together. We have learned how to unmute, turn on our cameras and spit into tubes. Many of our traditions adapted to the new normal. Our school continued to welcome new families, new faculty, and Tori Jueds, the new director of Lab.

As Lab celebrates its 125th year, the Parents' Association celebrates its own milestone of 120 years of creating a parent community. Parents have been an important part of culture and community, inspiring conversations and working with the school to find common ground. The Parents' Association has been hard at work trying to maintain Lab traditions with an eye to the ever changing landscape of living with Covid.

The Parents' Association Divisional Councils provided in-person and virtual opportunities for parents to meet and gather.

Creating safe spaces for parents to explore and discuss relevant information to support their families. In addition, the PA continues to devote a significant amount of its budget to support teacher/faculty innovations by providing grants that impact student learning. This year, the PA awarded more than \$15,000 in faculty grants.

The PA Speaker Series engaged in a new platform this year, capitalizing on the ability to Zoom. Our partnership with the Family Action Network offered parents opportunities to engage in topics that ranged from pandemic parenting to college admissions to supporting national experts at our own UChicago campus, all from the comfort of your own home. We offered 21 speakers that engaged parents in a multitude of conversations.

Despite Covid restrictions, parents continued to contribute to the community at Lab. More than 200 volunteers provided at least 1,200 volunteer hours. Parents make it possible for events such as Rites of May, Family Receptions at Graduations, Giant Gym Nights, BookSwap, Walk/Bike to School Days and Mentor Families. We thank all the parents who have supported these events and hope to see all of you at the next one.

We leave this year with a brighter outlook of community. We are so grateful for the opportunity to represent all the parent voices at Lab. Under the leadership of the incoming PA Co-Presidents, Lena Jessen and Melissa McMahill, we know that the 2022-23 Parents' Association Councils will embrace the mission of creating a positive parent community for all of us and we can't wait to be a part of it.

With gratitude,

Tina Louie and Cindy Marchessault
PA Co-Presidents 2021-22

Looking Ahead to 2022-2023

As we end the 2021-2022 school year, we celebrate this year's gradual return to in-person community events with the success of the recent Rites of May festival, a Lab tradition that began over 50 years ago in 1969. Its return on May 14 drew over 1,000 attendees from across our Lab School community. Many had never attended a "real" Rites of May, since the past two years have been all-virtual celebrations.

The event would not have been possible without two things: an incredibly dedicated team of veteran committee members; and the enthusiasm of our families to come together in community again as volunteers and participants.

Looking toward the 2022-2023 academic year, we hope, as Co-Presidents of the PA, to **build on that momentum of community and volunteerism**. By partnering with the PA Board, Lab administration and faculty, and all Lab families, we plan to focus on a few key areas and continue the amazing work Tina Louie and Cindy Marchessault began during their time leading the PA over the past year. We will work hard to continue fulfilling the PA mission of serving and strengthening the Lab Schools' community by:

- Encouraging volunteerism as a way to build in-person connections
- Championing diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, by increasing support to new and existing affinity groups, and by partnering with the school to support and develop Lab's DEI initiatives
- Supporting Wellness efforts by steering our PA Speaker Series toward addressing the issue of healthy sleep habits
- Fostering communication between parents and school administration
- Continuing to improve new parent introduction/onboarding processes
- Empowering divisional councils to continue building resources for their specific communities

We look forward to working with all of the parents who have been elected to serve on the PA Board in the coming year, as well as with the hundreds of other parents who volunteer in varied roles to enrich our school community every day.

Lena Jessen
and
Melissa McMahon
2022-2023
PA Co-Presidents



Speaker Series

The PA Speaker Series has enjoyed wonderful turnout and interest over the past few years, for which we are grateful to our community and the support of Lab's administration. In years past, the PA has devoted a significant amount of parent dues and volunteer hours to hosting live speakers to give Lab parents a deeper knowledge of a variety of issues that impact their own journey as parents.

When Covid pandemic restrictions made gathering in person impossible, we discovered that parents would come together remotely to experience our speaker series.

This year, we explored a different way to continue providing parents with relevant programming, by joining the Family Action Network as a sponsor. The Family Action Network has been a leader in providing the general community access to speakers and authors.

While the focus of FAN is parent education, there were also opportunities for educators to access programming. The PA sponsorship/membership extends those opportunities to Lab staff, faculty, and administration.

Participation in FAN has allowed us to take advantage of a robust virtual speaker lineup throughout the academic year. Our list of sponsored speakers this academic year was long and varied!

This year we heard from:

John List
Questlove
Billy Porter

Laurie Rosenwald Daniel
Lieberman Michelle Icard
Monika Guzman Jane
McGonigal Christine Porath
Todd Kashdan
William Stixrud and Ned
Johnson Thomas Insel
George Will
Nikole Hannah-Jones
Robert Frank
Laura Coates
Cathy Cassani-Adams
Michael Heller and James
Salzman Dana Suskind
Susan Wise





To recommend future speakers or share feedback, please email parents@ucls.uchicago.edu.

To see recordings of this year's speakers, visit LabParents.com.

Bookswap

Bookswap is a much-loved, long-standing annual tradition sponsored by the Parents' Association. Bookswap promotes literacy among our earliest readers, recycles books among Lab families, and lends us the opportunity to share what we have with others. Students are asked to bring in their gently-used books that they'd like to pass along to a new generation of readers, and in turn, can receive tickets to trade in for "new" books passed down by older students.

Dozens of parent volunteers donate their time and efforts to collect the thousands of books we receive each year from the students, and then painstakingly sort them into a multi-category, multi-reading-level "bookstore."

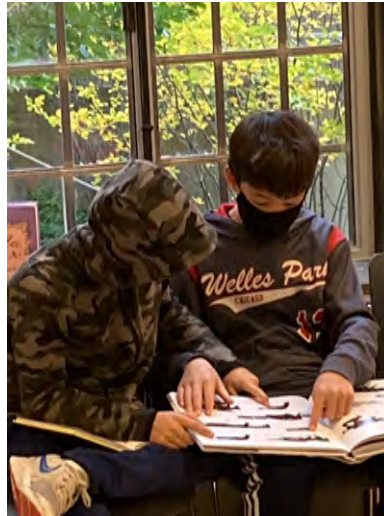
Teachers in grades N3–5 bring their classrooms into the Bookswap, and the children eagerly search for their new books to take home. Any remaining books are donated to a recipient school in our surrounding community.

Though Bookswap was put on hiatus for two years during the Covid pandemic, it was happily brought back in fall of 2021 and we had no lack of volunteers ready to help by donating hundreds of hours of their time.

This year's Bookswap brought in over 10,000 books and we were able to donate approximately 4,000 of those books to two different elementary schools, Kershaw Elementary and Carter G Woodson Public School, to augment their classroom libraries.

Bookswap continues to be a beloved tradition at Lab due to the unflagging support by parents, students, teachers, and the administration. Thank you for your support of Bookswap!

Ximena Colunga
Melissa McMahon
Catherine Rosenberg
Bookswap Co-chairs, 2021-2022



Holiday Book Fair and Bazaar

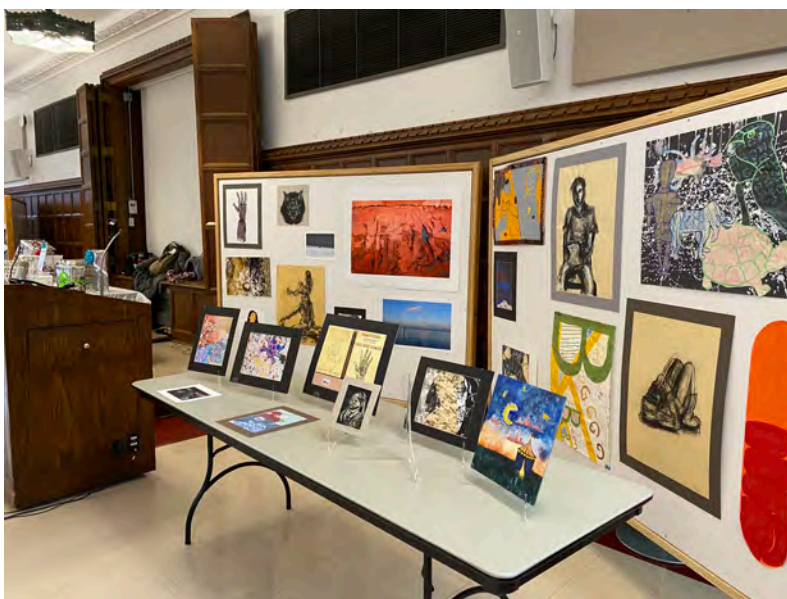
The Parents' Association continued the annual tradition of the Holiday Book Fair and Bazaar, which celebrates books and supports classrooms and student clubs before the holidays. This year's event was both virtual and in-person. The online Book Fair, run by neighborhood partner 57th Street Books, served as a home for classroom wishlists for ESH and LS teachers looking to build out their classroom libraries.

The online Holiday Bazaar featured student-supported causes and charities that Middle School and High School students fundraise for throughout the year.

In addition to the virtual fair and bazaar, the Parents' Association organized a one-day, in-person event at the Historic Campus. 57th Street Books opened a pop-up bookstore with a focus on Middle School, High School, and adult readers. Student clubs participated in fundraising activities to bring awareness and assistance to a number of different causes. The students'



clubs fare included gift wrapping, homemade crafts, and baked goods. Student artwork to raise money for Arts Fest (a student-run event) and Lab spirit wear were also popular tables this year.



The Parents' Association raised close to \$2,000 from book sales. Arts Fest was able to add \$775 to their event budget.

Ten different students clubs were able to raise money for causes as diverse as clean water, the translation of rare texts, and the education of girls around the world.

Moreover, the event was an opportunity for the community to gather in person for the first time this school year.

*Vanessa Copans
Andee Stacy
Audris Wong*

Holiday Book Fair and Bazaar Co-
chairs, 2021-2022

Earl Shapiro Hall Council



This year, the ESH Council worked to provide a safe, enjoyable, and accessible school experience for Lab's youngest students and their families, despite the continued challenges posed by Covid.

We looked to build community for families through a number of events.

For those new to Lab, we hosted six new family meetups in the late summer and early fall, and paired more than 80 new families with mentors.

We engaged more than 50 room parents to support our teachers in their classroom initiatives and in many cases, planning fall and spring potlucks returned! The potluck tradition is beloved, and so many were happy it's back.

And while parents couldn't be in the building on a regular basis, we worked to bring the inside out with seasonal window displays and spirit wear and Rites of May sales just outside the front door.

We also sought to provide a peek into the school days through three "Live with Kelly" video tours, bringing families inside through hallway tours.



Over the course of the school year, we partnered with the ESH team on six Parent-to-Parent events, moderating topics from math and reading to relationships and DEI work at ESH.

In addition to supporting our families, we sought to demonstrate our deep appreciation for the ESH faculty, staff, and administrators who help our children in so many ways, each and every day.

We hosted two appreciation events; with breakfasts in the fall and spring, and partnered with room parents to communicate about the new classroom gift program, which we hope brings equitable support to faculty school-wide.

Finally, we're so excited to celebrate the end of the school year with all of our students, faculty, and staff by treating everyone to paletas.

Each year at ESH, we learn more about what our families need, who they are, and how to engage them. Our Council continues to evolve with each new group of families, and each new class of the youngest members of the Lab community. We look forward to continued communication and growth over the next year.

Yulia Demodvich
Laila Shetty Geht
Rosalba Pina
Heather Schuster
Carrie Trimble

Earl Shapiro Hall Council



Lower School Council

The year started off with very limited access to campus but the Lower School Council was determined to continue to build community between families, faculty, and staff. Many activities were moved to an online format.

The Lower School Council began the year by organizing mentor families for those new to Lab. We hosted a virtual family orientation for incoming 3rd-grade families and 4th- and 5th-graders new to Lab, assisting the administration on an in-person scavenger hunt for the kids. Parents were invited to a first-day-of-school meetup held outside on the Midway, where they could meet the LS Council and administration in person.

Students were excited to see the lobby decorations which were changed seasonally by the council. Themes included back to school, Halloween, winter wonderland, and spring student photos. Students who participated in Walk to School Day were awarded a small token from the council.

The Council worked to find room parents for each class, with Council members stepping in to fill gaps. We hosted a virtual room parent orientation that helped room parents come up with ideas on how to help teachers remotely.

The Council also gathered a group of parents to work on the 5th-grade yearbook.



Parent-to-Parent (P2P) chats were organized with the counselors. Some P2P chats were held after the Administration's Parent Connect talks to expand on those topics, and to answer parent questions. Other topics were also discussed in the P2P meetings, including Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Support for teachers, administration and staff was shown by providing breakfast the morning after Lower School Parent Night. During teacher appreciation week the council provided breakfast along with a raffle for potted plants. PA Grants were awarded to Ms. Sukenic, Ms. Lambrix, Ms. Bunte and Ms. Cohen.

And while we weren't able to host the traditional indoor, grade-specific activities, we were excited to organize an end-of-year party on Scammons. The celebration included inflatables and games for all lower school kids.

It has been our privilege to serve the Lower School community this year.

Ximena Colunga
Meggan Friedman
Maria Herrick
Amy Koh

Lower School Council



Middle School Council



After almost a year of remote classes and events, Lab's Middle School (MS) Council team began the 2021-2022 school year by welcoming its 18 new students and their families.

The MS Council hosted a "Meet & Greet" at the Midway Plaisance where a total of 40 families, new and existing, attended the gathering on a beautiful Chicago summer morning.

This gave the new families an opportunity to meet with their mentor families and the Administrative team. Each new student was given a welcome gift.

Along with the Mentor/Mentee program launch for the new school year, we also launched our Parent-to-Parent (P2P) Meeting program in August. We started off with three separate one-hour, parent-led panel meeting for 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. This was to give new and existing (MS) families a platform to ask questions and seek guidance to set and manage expectations for each of the grades in the upcoming school year.

We hosted a total of 11 P2P meetings throughout the school year, covering a wide range of topics including: Transitioning to MS, Homework Strategies, Extracurricular & Cocurricular programs at Lab, High School Readiness, and DEI. Our guests/panelists included the Lab Staff & Faculty team and parents from the Lab Community.

The Middle School's student community would be nothing without the dedication of its teachers. To continue to support the ideas and initiatives of our teachers, the MS Council was happy to award PA Grants to 7 of 10 applicants for a total of \$6,000. You can read about those projects in the Grants portion of the annual report.

Hosting and supporting events and gatherings for our student community continues to be one of the MS Council's main goals. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, this year we were able to host the ever-so-popular Giant Gym Night - an evening of games and fun with your friends on campus. We had one of the highest participation totals ever, with approximately 150 students in attendance.

In addition, working with the MS Student Council team, we helped host the year-end events for each of the three grades: dances for the 7th- and 8th-graders, a 6th-grade carnival, and graduation events for the 8th-graders.



We are truly fortunate and grateful for the amazing working partnership we shared with the MS Administration team of Principal Ryan Allen, Assistant Principal Jessica Hanzlik, and newly appointed Dean of Students Ross Hunerfeld. From helping families navigate the exciting changes and transitions coming somewhat out of a pandemic (mask on/mask off), to making events and trips a reality for the students, and to most importantly always going above and beyond to support the entire MS community, we could not have asked for a better team to work with and support.

At the end of the 2021-2022 school year, two of the four council members will be rolling off after serving their two year-term. Two new candidates will be joining the team. For those of us rolling off, it has been our pleasure to serve and support this MS community. Next year's team of new and old members look forward to serving the parent community in the new school year.

Gaea Gomez Fidler
Ekta Joshi
Cathy Lee
Ramya Shah

Middle School Council

High School Council

The High School Council's work during the 2021-2022 school year focused on sharing information and fostering community. The Council met regularly with the High School Administration to discuss matters of concern from parents, and collaborate on a number of successful programs and events.

The Council started the year by welcoming more than 20 new families to the U-High community. All new families were matched with a mentor family and invited to a new family social gathering (both in person and virtual) and a PA orientation session before classes began. The Council continued to support new families with monthly drop-in informational sessions through the winter. Additionally, all incoming 9th graders and new-to-Lab students received a welcome water bottle proudly displaying their class year.

The Council hosted monthly Parent-to-Parent events that provided U-High parents with timely information pertaining to their child's education and experience. Topics included summer opportunities, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Healthy Start, and course selection. These discussions included a variety of presenters, both Lab-affiliated and outside experts. The Council also hosted a special evening program to share information about Safety & Security on the UChicago campus, featuring Detective Janelle Morales of the UCPD. More than 175 individuals attended the eight Parent-to-Parent events.

Students enjoyed seeing the High School Council on campus for a number of celebratory events. Parents served treats to kick off the year at Homecoming, at a study break during the end of the first semester, and finally as an end of year treat in May.

The Council hosted a Senior Pizza Party to celebrate college application submissions. In the spirit of welcoming parents back to campus, the Council also provided refreshments for an in-person May Project reception for parents and students.

The Council organized two faculty and staff breakfasts to show parents' appreciation for the U-High's academic team's hard work throughout the year.



The High School Council planned and hosted the Class of 2022 Graduation Reception. All graduates and their guests were welcome to attend a festive celebration in Ida Noyes Hall with hors d'oeuvres, live music, and a gift for the graduates. This capstone event, offered for the first time since the pandemic, provided a fitting send off for our seniors and their families.

Priya Laroia
Lisa Meyer
Sara Skelly
Audris Wong

High School Council



Diversity Committee



The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee supports the Parents Association by advocating for, and supporting school policies and practices that animate the Lab School Diversity Statement and empower families as partners and collaborators in furthering that mission.

The chairs of the Diversity Committee for 2021-2022 were Amanda Lewis and Beth Richie.

We attended Parent-to-parent meetings for each of the schools to introduce Nicole Williams, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Lab, and talk about DEI related issues.

In April, we hosted a summit of parent affinity groups to share ideas and discuss common goals and potential collaborations.

We hosted our annual data meeting where school administrators (Director, Director of Admissions, Registrar, Director of DEI) presented the current picture of diversity and inclusion data about Lab.

We met regularly with Nicole Williams and Tori Jueds and also attended the school-led Diversity Advisory Council meetings.

And finally, we are excited to announce our new DEI committee co-chairs for next year -- Camille Morgan Shorter and Sam Ozik.

Amanda Lewis
Beth Richie

DEI Committee Co-chairs

To become more engaged with the Diversity Committee, please visit labparents.org.

Affinity Groups

The Parents' Association fosters community through the support of a number of parent initiated and led affinity groups. The PA provides communication and event planning support as well as a small budget for each group.

This year, affinity groups hosted in-person and virtual community-building events.

Asian-Pacific American
Black Family Forum
Desi Culture Group
Difference Makers
Families for Antiracist at Lab (FAR)
Jewish Family Group
Latin American Spanish Organization (LASO)
Muslim Families and Friends

To learn more and support these groups, please visit LabParents.com. Interested in starting a group? Reach out to parents@ucls.uchicago.edu.





Teacher Grants

Parents' Association teacher grants are intended to promote educational excellence at all levels by assisting teachers in pursuing novel and exciting initiatives. Through a competitive grant process, the PA awarded over \$15,000 toward grants that funded or partially subsidized a variety of projects designed to advance and showcase students' learning and enrich the Lab community during 2021-2022.

In funding these grants, the PA focuses on enriching experiences, community building, social and emotional development, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Grants may also support extracurricular activities including clubs, interscholastic competitions, intramural sports or the arts or support programs that require a school-home collaboration for their success. Proposals are determined by the appropriate school council and the PA Board in partnership with school leadership.

Earl Shapiro Hall Grants

Larena Code: Awarded \$310 to host a music technology guest workshop for ESH 2nd-grade students and middle school and high school students at the Historic Campus March 7-11.

Maia Golley: Awarded \$700 for supplies for a mini-golf course project. Students worked in small groups to choose a theme for their mini-golf hole based on a feature of the fallen log ecosystem (such as Bark Beetle tunnels, fungi, pill bugs, and researched the topic of their choice.

They then built a playable mini-golf hole using paper-maiche, wood, and other natural materials, before installing the mini-golf course in a Lab public space, inviting the greater community to learn about the Fallen Log ecosystem by playing mini-golf.

Julie Jaworowicz: Awarded \$600 to hire a professional videographer to record the audio and video of the end-of-year "Nursery Four Sing".

Mary Jones: Awarded \$400 to bring artists of color into the classroom via Zoom. Artists shared their stories and how they became artists.

Amy Landry: Awarded \$2,427 to create opportunities for first-grade students to connect with other children in childcare centers and schools in the Chicagoland community by designing wooden blocks. These real-world, authentic interactions are designed to provide opportunities to practice empathy by connecting with other children, learning more about them, and then designing a unique wooden building block for each of them. The blocks would then be combined into sets and delivered to the childcare centers and schools.

Dolores Rita: Awarded \$224.78 to participate in a Smithsonian virtual totem poles. The class hoped to work in clay as a long-term project beginning with a replication of the two class pets - a bunny and a turtle - and culminating in an identity piece - a self-portrait. They also hoped to make another final piece - their own totem pole.

Teacher Grants

Lower School Grants

Mandy Bunty: Awarded \$1,200 to update and refresh the math cart. The cart was established in conjunction with the Parents Association a number of years ago. The purpose of the cart is to improve access to fun, engaging and appropriate math materials across Grades 3-5 and to increase interest and understanding of math concepts to all learners regardless of need (remediation-enrichment).

Riva Cohen: Awarded \$1,999 for Breakout EDU, an immersive games platform which consists of a combination of physical and digital puzzle elements that must be solved in a set amount of time.

Chantal Lambrix: Awarded \$210.36 to purchase nine plastic bins for recycling

Lisa Sukenic: Awarded \$423.75 to purchase a class set for the library's multiple copy collection of the book *Miles from Motown*, a historical novel in verse authored by Sukenic. The book will be used as part of the 4th grades Global Reading Challenge program during poetry month to continue the curricular pursuit of novel in verse unit.

Middle School Grants

Matt Landa: Awarded \$900 to explore the connection between wellness, social emotional learning, and making. The project aimed to find ways for students to utilize the Makerspace to enhance student wellness through projects that engage students creatively, constructively, socially, and emotionally.

Nicole Maglicco: Awarded \$400 to purchase supplies for friendship bracelets and Mala bead bracelets for middle school seminar periods for stress reduction.

Jeremy Shwartz: Awarded \$750 to develop a collaboration project with the University of Chicago Woodlawn Charter School bringing together middle school students from both UC-Lab and UC-Woodlawn on robotics teams.

AND

Awarded \$1,250 to work with the UCLS nursing team to develop a COVID infection mitigation plan for a student camping trip. The trip features a 3-night, 4-day trip to the Pretty Lake Adventure Center in Michigan, where students camp in tents. For previous trips, students shared cups, plates, silverware, etc., but given Covid rules, students were provided mess-kits that included their own plates, bowls, cups, forks, knives, spoons, and a mesh bag to hang dry items.

Katy Sinclair: Awarded \$400 for choral folders for each of the students. These folders help students organize and maintain all music and materials needed for choral rehearsal.

Middle School Grants cont'd

Andrea Vode: Awarded \$600 to provide DNA model materials for each student; ideally designing an engineering and design activity where students have a "point budget" of which they can use to acquire/"purchase" materials to create a 3D DNA model that incorporates their knowledge of the structure, code, and compliment.

Iris Yin: Awarded \$1,700 so the Middle School AAPI Teacher Planning Group could invite community cultural and advocacy organizations to the middle school in May to enrich the school-wide programming around Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month.

High School Grants

Nathan Aldredge: Awarded \$1,200 to explore the connection between wellness, Social Emotional Learning (SEL), Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), and Computer Aided Design (CAD)/Virtual Reality (VR). Aldredge planned to purchase three VR headsets to start teaching Gravity Sketch, with the goal of having students design their own safe spaces. Students could "walk through" each other's safe spaces to see how they differ from their own, experiencing different backgrounds and aspects of imagination.

Brad Brickner: Awarded \$600 to take students in Music History classes, as well as the students in the high school Chamber Music Collective to a May performance of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Katy Sinclair: Awarded \$300 for choral folders for each of the students. These folders help students organize and maintain all music and materials needed for choral rehearsal.



Parents' Association Board 2022-2023

Co-Presidents	Lena Jessen and Melissa McMahon
President Elect	Carrie Trimble
Treasurer	Abundio Rodriguez
Treasurer Elect	Cathy Cao
Secretary	Laura Payne
Secretary Elect	Alina Lazar
Communications Coordinator	Kimberly Picciola
Communications Coordinator Elect	Priya Laroia

High School Council

Sara Skelly
Andee Stacy
Audris Wong
Nausheen Zaidi

Middle School Council

Gaea Gomez Fidler
Catherine Rosenberg
Cheryl Rudbeck
Ramya Shah

Lower School Council

Ximena Colunga
Meggan Friedman
Matina Marks
Lubna Saleem

Earl Shapiro Hall

Yulia Demodvich
Laila Shetty Geht
Katie Powell
Jamie Shah

We are deeply grateful to our outgoing Board members for their service: Lisa Elmer, Maria Herrick, Ekta Joshi, Amy Koh, Cathy Lee, Amanda Lewis, Tina Louie, Cindy Marchessault, Samantha Morales, Rosalba Pina, Beth Richie, Heather Schuster

We are also grateful to Matina Marks and Lily Sugrue for their commitment and leadership of the Lab Spiritwear project.

We give our heartfelt thanks as well to the countless staff, faculty, and administrators at Lab who partner with us every day.

And to our many fellow parents, and student volunteers, we couldn't do this without you!

THANK YOU!