



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
supported Lab students, parents, and teachers
through a wide array of events and programs.**

**This Annual Report highlights our achievements during
the 2022-23 school year.**

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Parents' Association Co-Presidents' Letter



As we wrap up the 2022-23 school year, we want to extend our gratitude to all of the parents who showed up this year to volunteer, spend time in classrooms, and participate in our beloved Lab community traditions and celebrations - not the least of these was the 54th annual Rites of May festival, held on May 13. This year, the celebration drew over 1,800 attendees from across our Lab School community. Rites of May would not have been possible without our incredibly dedicated team of veteran committee members and the enthusiasm of our families to come together, both as participants and volunteers.

In addition to Rites of May, the PA sponsors two other signature events: Bookswap and Holiday Bookfair and Bazaar. New this year, we hosted a fancy dress swap to

promote sustainability. These are also volunteer-run events involving coordination with teachers, administrators, outside vendors, and students. We look forward to bringing in new faces to help with those events each year. Another highlight was the amazing response to affinity group opportunities. Four new affinity groups joined our ranks, bringing the total number to 12. Those groups hosted potlucks, bonfires, coffees, and celebrated holidays together, forging meaningful bonds around shared experience.

Looking toward the 2023-24 academic year, we hope, as Co-Presidents of the PA, to build on this enthusiasm, working toward increasing community participation, inclusion, and volunteerism. In addition to continuing with our annual event traditions, we are happy to increase funding for affinity groups from \$600 to \$1000, in order to better meet their needs and encourage gatherings. We eagerly anticipate welcoming new families over the summer by hosting meet and greet parties, and we look forward to the opportunity to partner with room parents in grades N-5, where we recognize that families feel a strong tie to their classroom community. In grades 6-12, we hope to sponsor grade-wide potlucks to reconnect with parents in our children's grades. By partnering with the division PA Councils, Lab administration and faculty, and all Lab families, we will work toward fulfilling the PA mission of strengthening the Lab Schools' community.

We also spent some time focusing on wellness initiatives including participating in Youth Mental Health First Aid training, and hosting a special Parent-to-Parent discussion on the importance of healthy sleep habits for middle and high school students, and how it relates to school start times. The well-attended discussion was coupled with a giveaway of the book *The Sleep Deprived Teen* by Lisa L. Lewis, one of our featured speaker series authors.

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

Lena Jessen and Melissa McMahill

2022-23 PA Co-Presidents

Treasurer's Report

The Parents' Association financially supports the work of divisional councils, special committees, and affinity groups in their work. From special events to teacher grants, Parents' Association dues and revenue enable most of the activities that parents and students enjoy throughout the year.

The 2022-23 PA budget totaled \$164,950 with a breakdown of total expense budget as follows (based on anticipated need and prior years' expenses):

- All Schools = \$78,050
- ESH = \$16,900
- Lower School = \$17,500
- Middle School = \$20,300
- High School = \$32,200



This was a very rewarding year, as the PA executed a significant number of events and enjoyed pre-pandemic levels of participation. Highlights from the year include:

- \$15,000 in grant funding to support Lab faculty in advancing the curriculum through innovative projects that benefit the community. Awarded grants focused on accessing the best equipment for projects, strengthening analytical and abstract thinking, interpreting and solving problems, as well as celebrating nature. Topics ranged from Native American history to music, current events and issues to cultural explorations.
- \$8,700+ to celebrate and appreciate our faculty and staff at Teacher Appreciation events, including meals and gift cards
- Supporting the expansion of affinity groups and continuing to support the DEI Committee and Speaker Series.
- Providing funding for student events, such as Giant Gym Night and dances
- Collaborating with the school to help finance the U-High and Middle School graduations, including individual gifts for students

*Abundio Rodriguez, Treasurer
Cathy Cao, Treasurer-Elect*

Speaker Series

The PA Speaker Series offered a robust slate of events that touched on topics of interest for families with all ages of children and with diverse interests. We thank our community and Lab's administration for continuing to support the Speaker Series. During the 2022-23 school year, the PA once again partnered with the Family Action Network in order to provide varied content and frequent opportunities to gather virtually.

As we continue to emerge from the Covid pandemic, the PA looks forward to offering engaging parent programming through new channels and platforms during the 2023-24 school year

This year's speakers included:

- Gabor Mate, *The Myth of Normal*
- Lisa L. Lewis, *The Sleep-Deprived Teen*
- Dr. Becky, *Good Inside*
- Donna Jackson Nakazawa, *Girls on the Brink*
- Shanterra McBride and Rosalind Wiseman, *Courageous Discontent*
- Charlotte Burgess-Auburn, *You Need a Manifesto*
- Lisa Damour, *The Emotional Lives of Teenagers*
- Matthew Desmond, *Poverty, By America*
- Arline Geronimus, *Weathering*
- Mary Louise Kelly, *It. Goes. So. Fast.*



Bookswap

Bookswap continues to be a much-loved, long-standing annual tradition sponsored by the Parents' Association. Bookswap promotes literacy among our earliest readers, supports Lab's focus on environmental awareness, and teaches students about gratitude and giving. Students bring in their gently-used books that they'd like to pass along to their younger peers, and in turn, receive tickets to swap for "new" books donated by older students.

This year, students brought in thousands of books, making the event extremely successful. Judd C116 was filled with magical mysteries, historical biographies, and scientific surprises. Early Childhood and Lower School students visited the Bookswap and selected new reading selections to take home and enjoy. Over 70 parent volunteers helped collect, sort, and shop with the students. At the conclusion of the event, 54 cases of books were donated to Parker Community Academy.



6th grade won a grade level pizza party in appreciation for the 1,381 books donated by the students. Ms. Beaulieu, Mr. Campbell, and Ms. Miller's advisories enjoyed donut parties in thanks for their exceptional participation.



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



Ximena Colunga
Vanessa Copans
Amanda Tyler
Bookswap Co-chairs, 2022-23

Holiday Book Fair and Bazaar

The Parents' Association hosted the annual Holiday Book Fair and Bazaar, which celebrates books, supports classroom libraries, and showcases student clubs during the winter holiday season. With festive decorations, tasty treats, and so many shopping options, this year's event was a hit with families of students of all ages.

In partnership with 57th Street Books, hundreds of children's and adult titles were on display. The PA received 15% of all book sales, making it a lucrative event.

Thirty teachers submitted classroom wish lists which families had the opportunity to support with the purchase of a book. Teachers gratefully received the book donations to build their classroom libraries and provide more diverse reading selections for their students.

The Book Fair and Bazaar featured a host of student clubs and classrooms, fundraising for a variety of causes and projects. Lower, middle, and high school students participated and hosted tables featuring homemade



arts and crafts, baked goods, and more. One highlight of the event was the student art sale which generated over \$500 in donations to support U-High's annual ArtsFest event. The art displays and student presence made the Book Fair and Bazaar a popular event with both parents and children.

The event continues to be a wonderful celebration of the Lab community and our values of exhibiting kindness and learning experientially.

*Vanessa Copans
Andee Stacy*

Holiday Book Fair and Bazaar
Co-chairs, 2022-23

Rites of May

The Rites of May continues to be Lab's longest running event supported by the Parents' Association celebrating the school year, the coming of spring, and the cultural diversity of the community. The event boasted foods from around the world, booths hosted by affinity and students groups, and fun and games for all. This year, over 1,800 people attended.



Earl Shapiro Hall Council



The ESH Council offered a full calendar of events to support parents, students, and teachers throughout the school year. From building community to information sharing, they made connections and brought joy to the Early Childhood Campus.

They kicked off the year with new family meetups in August which welcomed new families to the community with casual park gatherings.

The Council hosted a variety of events for parents to learn from each other and from presenters on topics of interest. At Parent to Parent meetings and Parent Coffee events, families exchanged ideas and advice and enjoyed informal conversation.



The ESH team also supported teachers and staff at ESH. They funded a number of exciting, new, and innovative projects through the distribution of grants. Celebratory meals hosted by the PA bookended the year to show how much the families value and appreciate the work that teachers and staff do to support Lab's youngest learners.

The Council also brought some fun and joy to students through a number of festive activities. They welcomed students on the first day of school with an impressive balloon installation that helped make the experience memorable. Another balloon installation celebrated Valentine's Day and was appreciated by students, parents, and teachers alike.

In order to promote a culture of gratitude at Lab, the Council distributed Gratitude Day cards to all students. These cards encourage people to write down something they are grateful for each day, which can help promote a positive mindset and build stronger relationships.

In partnership with the Phoenix Sustainability Project group from the University, the Council also hosted a Halloween costume exchange. This initiative helped promote sustainability and reduce waste by encouraging families to exchange gently used costumes rather than buying new ones. It was a fun and eco-friendly way to celebrate Halloween and promote sustainable practices in our school community.

It was a busy year at ESH, filled with community connections, growth and learning, and memorable fun.

Yulia Demodvich
Laila Shetty Geht
Katie Powell
Jaime Shah

Earl Shapiro Hall Council, 2022-23



Lower School Council

The Lower School Council started the school year with a number of activities to help students and families settle into the new school year at Lab. Support during transitions bolsters student well-being and helps develop community ties. New students attended a special orientation hosted by the PA and received a t-shirt and water bottle. The Council also helped welcome rising third graders to the Lower School by assisting at the annual scavenger hunt. The fun continued on the first day of school with parents and administrators receiving picture frames and enjoying a coffee social. From Back to School Night refreshments for parents to training room parents, the Council had a very busy start to the year!

The team worked with the Lower School Administration to support the relaunch of the Design Engineering Center (previously the Makers' Space).

The Lower School Council hosted Lab's annual walk/bike to school in the fall, providing bracelets, pins, and fruit for the students as they arrived at school. This event promotes bicycle safety, environmental awareness, and healthy choices.

The Council brought color and joy to Blaine lobby with beautiful decorations to celebrate the seasons. With creativity and care, volunteers transformed the space for Halloween, autumn, winter, and spring.

The Council hosted well-attended Parent to Parent discussions with the Lower School counseling team, focused on social-emotional health, providing additional



support in conjunction with the Growth and Reproduction unit, and connecting Lower and Middle School parents on the transition to Middle School. Lower School parents also had the opportunity to gather in the winter for an informal coffee that encouraged community connections.

Teachers enjoyed the support of the Council with a Teacher Appreciation breakfast to acknowledge their work with the students all year. The Council also awarded three teacher grants for innovative projects totaling \$4,000.

Each grade celebrated the end of the year with a grade-level social party. The Council organized activities for students to enjoy as they finished another memorable year in the Lower School.

The Lower School Council did a wonderful job maintaining and building relationships across the division by supporting families at every stage in their Lower School journey.

Ximana Colunga
Meggan Friedman
Matina Marks
Lubna Saleem

Lower School Council, 2022-23



Middle School Council



The Middle School Council worked tirelessly this year to enhance school spirit and elevate the Lab experience for students and parents. They honored the growing independence of students in the division by working with the Student Council to plan social events and celebrations.

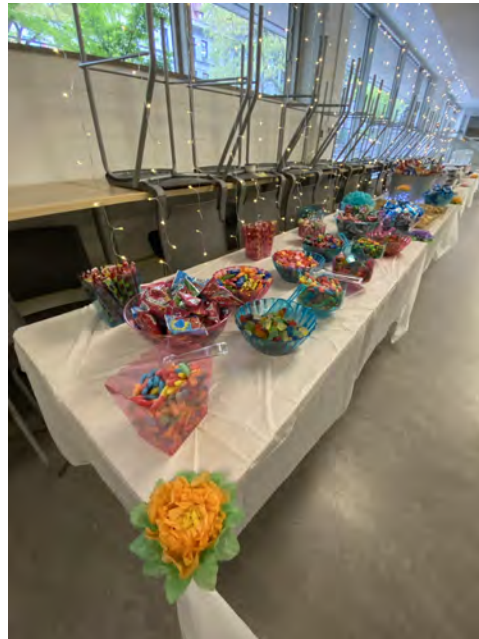
The Council started the year by welcoming new to Lab parents. This gave new families an opportunity to make connections, learn more about Lab, and pick up some spirit wear swag.

Parent programming during the year included two parent coffee socials, as well as a full calendar of Parent to Parent

informational events. Topics included grade level expectations and parent experiences, the transition back to school, High School choice options (U-High, CPS Selective Enrollment, etc.), and U-High course selection.

The Council planned and executed a wide variety of social events for the students. Giant Gym Night continues to be a favorite event and was hosted twice this school year. The team worked closely with each grade level's student council to plan an event of their choosing. Eighth graders selected a winter formal and a "beach" bash. Seventh grade enjoyed a spring fling social. Sixth graders ended the year with a field day and yearbook signing, which included a movie and Coca-Cola.

The Council also supported eighth grade graduation celebrations, including the rehearsal luncheon and refreshments for the post-Graduation reception.



The Council also worked with the Middle School administration and faculty to execute important initiatives. The Council provided valuable feedback during the planning process for the new 2023-24 school year schedule. They awarded eight grants to faculty members for a range of projects that supported the Middle School community and curriculum. They also partnered with the administration for the launch of the "Spirit Squad" effort to build school spirit at Middle School sporting events. To thank the faculty and staff, the Council provided an appreciation breakfast in the fall and a celebratory lunch in the spring.

Middle School continues to be an important time in Lab students' growth and development. The work of the Middle School Council honors and reflects the needs of students and parents during this transitional time.

*Gaea Gomez Fidler
Catherine Rosenberg
Cheryl Rudbeck
Ramya Shah*

Middle School Council, 2022-23



High School Council

The 2022-23 High School Council served as a bridge between school administration and families. The Council also supported student well-being and community building.

The Council supported the return to the school year with a series of opportunities for connection and learning. A cocktail reception at the start of the school year brought the cohort together with existing Lab parents in a festive, social setting. The Council hosted “drop in/office hours” at U-High orientation for families and also included a spirit wear sale. The team also hosted a light dinner for faculty and “grab and go” options for parents at Back to School Night.

Students enjoyed a variety of fun treats throughout the school year. The Council gave away candy at Homecoming games, in line with the “Willy Wonka” theme of Spirit Week. They passed out 500 donuts during January finals week and a spring treat of paletas before the seniors left for May Project.

The High School Council planned six very successful parent to parent events on a variety of topics pertinent to U-High families. Two hundred and fourteen unique visitors attended those virtual events. Parents also had the opportunity to gather in person at two parent coffees that featured Lab swag giveaways.

The Council supported the work and creativity of the U-High faculty by awarding three teacher grants in the amount of \$4000. They showed appreciation for both faculty and staff at a spring appreciation breakfast.



The High School Council again hosted one of Lab's premier events - the U-High graduation reception in Ida Noyes Hall. Over 600 guests attended. Each graduate received a picnic blanket to commemorate their time at Lab.

In celebrating milestones, bringing joy to students, and aiding parents, the High School Council supported the school community in invaluable ways this year.

*Sara Skelly
Andee Stacey
Audris Wong
Nausheen Zaidi*

High School Council, 2022-23



DEI 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 DEI Committee provided eight scholarships to Lab teachers to attend the upcoming University of Illinois at Chicago Institute for Research on Race and Policy 2023 Summer Education Workshop.

The committee supported parent education on DEI topics by creating and distributing quarterly newsletters for parents to engage with DEI across Lab Schools, as well as to emphasize the work of PA affinity groups, teachers, and administrators.

They hosted the annual DEI Data Meeting in conjunction with the Lab Admissions team and DEI Director Nicole Williams. Presenters shared about the current picture of diversity and inclusion at Lab.

The committee has begun working with the Early Childhood team to plan a Black Lives Matter Parent Workshop, tentatively scheduled for Fall 2023. Parent volunteers, teachers, and counselors will lead small group discussions around the principles of the Black Lives Matter movement.

After a robust year of programming, the DEI committee looks forward to continuing its work and mission next school year.



*Camille Morgan Shorter
Samantha Ozik*

DEI Committee Co-Chairs, 2022-23

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 budget for each group.

Black Family Forum

- Celebrated Black History Month with Community Potluck and Performance Showcase
- Volunteered for MLK Day of Service at Bronzeville neighborhood schools
- Hosted social events, including annual back-to-school meet up and restaurant week gathering



Chinese Family and Friends

- Planned the Mid-Autumn Festival potluck and the Lunar New Year Celebration potluck with over 70 families attending
- Supported U-High students in collecting donations for the Turkish earthquake
- Participated in Rites of May



Desi Culture Group

- Hosted 4th annual Diwali dance party with 180 people attending and raising more than \$5000 for the Fund for Lab
- Staged their first performing arts event for LabArts - a Shradhanjali celebrating playback singer, Lata Mangeshkar - featuring 130 vocal, dance, and music artists with more than 350 guests attending
- Hosted a booth at the Rites of May featuring mehndi, henna, and decorative body tattoos

Difference Makers

- Offered casual gathering opportunities, including coffee socials and potlucks, to allow families of diverse learners to find and give support to one another.
- Engaged with administration on important initiatives, including an open letter to the Director on student support, middle school tutoring, resource sharing, and community awareness
- Launched a mentor program for families of diverse learners



Families Against Racism

- Partnered with the PA DEI Committee to deliver a quarterly newsletter focused on DEI at Lab
- Distributed over 45 copies of New Kid by Jerry Craft to families across all levels of the school



Families of Gender Expansive or Transgender Kids

- Hosted a meet-and-greet to build community and offer support at the start of the school year
- Supported, publicized, and attended a parent and staff conversation during the visit by author Kyle Lukoff to the Middle School
- Collaborated with library faculty to host a reading event for Transgender Day of Visibility with Middle School students from PRISM reading to students and families in the ESH library
- Planned a bake sale for Transgender Day of Visibility with proceeds donated to Brave Space Alliance



Iranian Family and Friends

- In their inaugural year, hosted Shabe Yalda and Nowruz events
- Displayed traditional “haft sin” at ESH and served Iranian tea to all that stopped by to learn more about Nowruz
- Welcomed new families and shared regular updates on events in Chicago for Iranians

Jewish Family Group

- Celebrated with a number of special events, including a Challah baking class, Sukkah hop, Hannukah hot chocolate ice skating party, Shabbat dinner, and a Purim secret Esther game
- Distributed a newsletter to a mailing list of over 80 families
- Participated in the Rites of May



Korean Family & Friends

- Launched this new affinity group with a November Mom's night out dinner and potluck with Korean food, K-pop music, traditional games and treats for students of all age groups
- Joined forces with Chinese Family and Friends for Lunar New Year, wearing Korean traditional dress and contributing Korean food, activities, treats
- Welcomed new to Lab Korean families



La Familia

- In its first year, this affinity group hosted Dia de los Muertos and Posada y Parranda events
- Supported U-High student events with donations and publicity
- Worked with the Admissions department on efforts to recruit and welcome Latino families

Muslim Family and Friends

- Planned Friendsgiving potluck with 80 attendees
- Worked with U-High students on Ramadan ramp up event to share what Ramadan means to the students, and how they experience fasting during the school year
- Hosted Iftar Under the Stars potluck and Eid potluck, including a senior night celebration for graduating students



Parents' Association Board 2023-2024

Co-Presidents	Lena Jessen and Melissa McMahon
President Elect	Gaea Gomez Fidler
Treasurer	Cathy Cao
Treasurer Elect	Abundio Rodriguez
Secretary	Alina Lazar
Secretary Elect	Laura Payne
Communications Coordinator	Priya Laroia
Communications Coordinator Elect	Anne Groves

High School Council

Sakshi Joshi
Faiza Sabeen
Andee Stacy
Nausheen Zaidi

Middle School Council

Farah Adhi
Amy Koh
Catherine Rosenberg
Cheryl Rudbeck

Lower School Council

Stephanie Knox
Matina Marks
Samantha Morales
Lubna Saleem

Earl Shapiro Hall

Carly Bradford
Melissa Kelley-Knutson
Katie Powell
Jamie Shah

We are deeply grateful to our outgoing Board members for their service: Ximena Colunga, Yulia Demodvich, Meggan Friedman, Laila Shetty Ghet, Laura Payne, Kim Picciola, Abundio Rodriguez, Ramya Shah, Sara Skelly, Audris Wong

We are also grateful to Matina Marks for her 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!