

CHAPIN TODAY



Early in the school year, a magical mural along the Gordon Room hallway greeted members of the Chapin community. The hallway was virtually impossible to traverse without stopping to examine—and re-examine—the intricate artwork created by Lower School students to celebrate Chapin's theme this year, *Brave for Our Earth*.

It was a book read by Dr. Hayot in an All-School Assembly that ignited the young students' imaginations. "Sofia's Dream" is a story of a little girl who, after befriendng the Moon and seeing Earth from his perspective, makes it her mission to do all she can to protect her precious planet and to encourage others to do the same.

Recognizing how inspiring the girls found the tale, the Lower School teachers came up with the idea for a mural that would carry on the message of protecting our earth. They asked the students to work in groups to create squares of art using recycled materials and featuring individualized messages for sustainable actions one might take, such as turning off the lights and riding bicycles instead of taking other modes of transportation.

The resulting quilt-like mural was a colorful and inventive representation of the students' suggestions of ways to be environmentally responsible. It was also an important daily reminder for all.



*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."**

- Margaret Mead, Cultural Anthropologist (1901-1978)

Dear Friends,

When a student arrives at Chapin for her first day of school—regardless of the grade at which she enters—a strong community envelops her. She learns quickly that this nurturing community extends far beyond her peers, teachers and Chapin staff; it includes parents, past parents, grandparents and alumnae. She realizes her connection to these individuals early and appreciates that her Chapin family extends beyond 100 East End Avenue. As her understanding of what being a world citizen deepens, so, too, does her sense of self, her strength and her compassion. I thank you, as members of this community, for being a presence in our girls' lives by your continued engagement in and support of all things Chapin.

Each article in this issue of Chapin Today is a celebration of community. The cover story details the passion expressed in the form of an extraordinary mural by our Lower School. Using recycled materials, the girls inspired us to protect our planet and provided tips on just how to do it. Middle and Lower School students and faculty were extremely fortunate to be immersed in Mexican culture made possible through a visit from artist Demetrio García Auilar. He answered questions from our girls, who were able to use their impressive Spanish skills, as he masterfully created clay figures before their eyes. Class 5's participation in the Sweet Readers program, now in its second year, has been nothing short of magical. Through this service-learning initiative, our girls are again spending time reading and creating art with neighborhood elders diagnosed with Alzheimer's and dementia. The maturity and compassion the girls demonstrate emerges from their knew knowledge of the impact of these neurologically based conditions—knowledge gained from their science and Health programs. The exacting and poignant performances of the Upper School drama students in the production of "RENT" were inspiring. Even more inspiring was their determination to give back, which they did by donating proceeds from ticket sales to Trinity Place Shelter, a safe space for LGBTQ youth and young adults. Proving that the bonds formed at Chapin remain strong throughout the years, alumnae across generations and professions again gathered to support one another at a recent career workshop. The zenith of our community-focused events was the spectacular A Benefit Celebrating Chapin, held on October 20. More than 900 of you gathered for the festive—and hilarious, thanks to parent Jerry Seinfeld—occasion that was made even more special by the generous support shown for Chapin's Head of School Discretionary Fund. I cannot express how appreciative I am for the ability to fund unexpected programs or partnership opportunities that arise during the academic year.

Every day I have the opportunity to witness creative, dedicated and committed citizens grow at Chapin, and I have the pleasure of knowing that you, the heart of our wonderful Chapin community, are also changing the world in your own ways.

With fondest regards,

Patricia Haupt
Head of School

* Used with permission

ARTIST IN



With artist Lorenzo Demetrio García Aguilar's visit to Chapin came the unique opportunity for students in Lower and Middle School to come together for an interdisciplinary program blending art and Spanish.

Hailing from the town Ocotlán de Morelos, which is located in Oaxaca, Mexico, Demetrio (the name he prefers) has been surrounded by artists since birth. His grandparents—well known artists Isaura Alcántara Díaz and Jesús Aguilar Revilla—began a rich family tradition of folk artistry by crafting "muñecas," or human figures, out of clay. Their innovative approach captured the dynamic culture of pueblo life in a way not yet seen in art. His mother Josefina Aguilar, an acclaimed folk artist also known for her clay figurines, passed the art form down to her son.

RESIDENCE

Seated before slabs of clay and crafting tools, Demetrio spent his day at Chapin as an artist in residence in the Lower School art room. There, he was visited by students of all ages, who intently observed his process and watched in awe as he placed figure after figure on the table before them. Demetrio answered questions posed to him in Spanish as he worked on figures that would be displayed on an altar to celebrate the traditional Mexican holiday “Día de los Muertos,” or “Day of the Dead.”

Prior to Demetrio’s visit, Class 3 students viewed images of his work, and that of his mother’s, to gain a better understanding how he has been influenced by the generations before him. In the days that followed his visit, they were able to confidently explain to their peers the significance of the “Día de los Muertos” holiday, during which family and friends spend three days in prayer and remembrance of the dead. They will continue to learn of the rich traditions and cultures of Mexico during their intensive study on Mexico in their Spanish classes in the spring.

Animated conversations about the holiday continued in the Class 5 Spanish classes. The girls were pleased to further explore figures that were donated as a gift to the School and to pass along the stories behind them, just as Demetrio and his family before him had.

– Alile Eldridge



SWEET READERS



A group of fifth graders tentatively filed into the bright room that houses the *Sweet Readers* program and tried out a greeting to the elder partners with whom they'd been matched. "Hi there," one elder cheerfully responded to his new friends. They were off to a great start! Over the next month and a half, this group of girls would look forward to spending an hour a week with their elder partners who live with Alzheimer's and related dementias.

Karen Young began *Sweet Readers* after noticing that her mother, who has Alzheimer's, responded more to reading and art-based activities with her granddaughter than to other activities. The interaction between an elder and a young person, in combination with the vehicle of art, is often exhilarating to observe, notes Ms. Young. With Chapin's *Sweet Readers* program, three groups of Class 5 students rotate and participate for six consecutive weeks each. Ms. Young would like to see these students "continue to be engaged on some level throughout middle school and into their high school years."

The girls' focus on this first day at the facility was to get to know their partners, whose ability to respond to the students varies. The students are coached in advance to ask open-ended questions and use small affectionate gestures, like a

hand on the shoulder, to establish rapport with their partners. Pleased to hear that her partner had worked as an engineer, one girl exclaimed, "We're going to be engineers when we grow up!" Both girls asked about his favorite bridges and tunnels and told him about theirs.

A picture of a bright orange flower was on hand that day for the girls to use in their discussions with their partners. Ms. Young asked the girls to start a conversation about what they saw in the picture, which was of one of Georgia O'Keeffe's paintings of a poppy. One group discovered that the color of the flower was their partner's favorite. Another elder said that he noticed the movement and layers within the painting.

Ms. Young also steered the groups to produce a sound based on a different image, that of "Broadway Boogie Woogie," by Piet Mondrian. One elder said that the shapes and colors made him think of traffic and, along with a Chapin student, produced the sound of cars honking. The groups then cut out colorful shapes to represent the sounds inspired by the painting.

Trude Goodman, the Class 5 Humanities teacher who helped to implement *Sweet Readers* at Chapin after it was brought to her attention by a student, prepares the girls in advance for what she calls "appropriate discomfort." There are so many variables that the girls must understand with regard to the well-being of the elders, she



said. The reality is that they might, for instance, decline over the six-week period of time in which the girls are with them. Ms. Goodman also prepares the girls for the possibility that on some days their partners might not have a great deal of energy or might not wish to talk. It is normal for them to experience difficulty in communication and it is okay. The true purpose of this program is to “find the person behind the disease,” Ms. Goodman stressed.

A few days before their first trip to C.V. Starr Adult Day Services, the girls visited The Trinity School to hear Dr. Gregory Petsko, an expert on Alzheimer’s, speak about the disease. The students also received training in the strategies that would help them connect with the elders.

Students who participated in the *Sweet Readers* program last year held the “Memory Olympics” last spring, which featured memory games created from their work with the elders. The passion they felt for the program was clear as they presented testimonials of their *Sweet Readers* experiences to their Middle School peers and faculty. This also provided them with a good opportunity to practice their public speaking skills, said Ms. Goodman.

The girls’ goal each week is to try to pick up where they left off and to keep as much continuity as possible in their art projects from the



previous week. When their time as a Sweet Reader comes to an end, the girls meet with the next group of Class 5 readers to “pass the baton.” This, Ms. Goodman says, lets the girls in the incoming group know what to expect and helps to smooth the transition.

Ms. Goodman hopes that the girls who participate in *Sweet Readers* will continue to be active in working with elders and other kinds of service in their community. In the meantime, the program brings great joy to both the elders and the girls. The students leave their first experience eager to return and to tell everyone about it.

– Mary Braden





NO DAY BUT TODAY

This fall, members of Upper School drama performed “RENT” under the bright lights of the Assembly Room. The musical, written by the late Jonathan Larson, shares the journey of young artists as they struggle to make a life in New York City.

The carefully crafted set offered a view into the East Village neighborhood of Alphabet City, where the characters struggled with issues like poverty, poor living conditions, substance abuse and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The cast, under the direction of drama teacher

Georgette Kelly '03, helped to bring their characters to life through songs, such as the well-known “Seasons of Love,” “La Vie Bohème,” “Rent” and “Another Day.”

Prior to the show’s debut, all members of the Upper School Drama Club had the great fortune of spending time with actor and singer Adam Kantor, who was the last person to perform the leading role of Mark Cohen in “RENT” on Broadway. A friend of Ms. Kelly’s, he was asked to come to Chapin to discuss his career with the girls. Because the musical was videotaped before it closed on Broadway, many of the girls were able to see Mr. Kantor’s performance in advance of his visit. They were thrilled to meet him.

“Mark’s visit had an impact on our Chapin production because it made the show feel a little more real...even at an early stage in rehearsals,” said Ms. Kelly. She also noted the benefit of hearing him talk about the nerves he’d suffered from and the process he implemented to move beyond them. The secret, he shared, was to build a genuine connection with a character. He encouraged the Chapin performers to do the same.

“Did you ever get tired of doing the same thing?” a student asked of Mr. Kantor. “No,” he replied, “But it is important to develop a deeper understanding of your character’s development continuously.” Mr. Kantor also underscored the importance of understanding characters in new and fresh ways. “Peel away the layers; continue to discover and keep [your performance] as honest as possible,” he advised.

Noting New York City’s abundance of theater and arts programs, Mr. Kantor encouraged the girls to take advantage of local opportunities. “This city is the best training you can have as an actor!” he exclaimed.

The students were eager to learn about the impact “RENT” has had on the actor’s career. The show’s legacy, Mr. Kantor explained, is still important to him today. He described how moved he was to receive fan mail from people affected by HIV and AIDS, and how proud he was of the show’s unique approach to making Broadway more accessible to those who can’t afford it otherwise. While on Broadway, “rush tickets” for “RENT” were sold at a discounted price of \$20 through

a lottery-style system two hours before each show. Today, many Broadway productions continue to offer the Nederlander Theater tradition by offering “rush tickets” for their performances.



After months of preparation and hard work, and equipped with the sage advice from Mr. Kantor, the Upper School actors took to the stage for three sold-out shows. They were met with roaring applause at the end of each performance.

While they could have wished only for the audiences’ warm reception, these actors sought more from their experience by giving back. The girls engaged in a community outreach partnership with Trinity Place Shelter, a local non-sectarian shelter that provides a safe space for LGBTQ youth and young adults, and donated a portion of the proceeds from each ticket to the local shelter. They raised over \$1,000.

At the close of the show, the actors and the audience members were left not only with fond memories of wonderful performances, but a reminder of the importance of placing value on each new day.

– Alile Eldridge

CHAPIN EVENTS

A BENEFIT CELEBRATING CHAPIN

Over 900 guests, including current and past parents, alumnae, trustees, special friends and members of the professional community, attended *A Benefit Celebrating Chapin*, on October 20, 2014. The event, featuring a performance by parent Jerry Seinfeld, raised over \$700,000 to endow Chapin's Head of School Discretionary Fund, which allows the School to support unique and unexpected opportunities that may arise after the yearly budget has been approved.





CHAPIN EVENTS



Event photographs by Todd France.
"Gator" photos by Smilebooth.



ALUMNAE CAREER NETWORKING EVENING

In January, Chapin welcomed more than 70 alumnae for its Alumnae Career Workshop. Featuring workshops, roundtables and a reception, the evening offered alumnae at varying stages in their careers the opportunity to learn from each other and make new connections.

Liz Borod Wright '95, who led a session on finding ways to benefit personally from social media, stressed how easily connections that can have a big impact on one's career can be made.

Bianca Caban '05 and Kim Karetsky Krinsky '95 facilitated the "The Art of Networking" workshop that prompted great conversation and questions across many industries. "Every woman in here is well-rounded...but you have to find a way to tell your story," Ms. Caban stressed to the participants.

"Your First Five Years" specifically addressed the challenges facing those who have recently left college. "How have you been trying to figure out what's best for you?" Lauren Bonner '99 asked the group. She encouraged each alumna to solicit feedback from close friends,



ALUMNAE NOTES



coworkers and family members about her strengths and weaknesses and to ask how they've dealt with their own struggles.

Five alumnae joined together in a panel to share their wisdom and stories about entrepreneurship. "Going out on your own is scary, but it works," said moderator Samantha Topping Gellert '89. Having a supportive partner can also make a huge difference, panelist Lisa Harman Gooder '91 added.

Once the sessions ended, refreshments were served and the attendees mingled happily, continuing their conversations and making connections.

- Mary Breaden

KINDERGARTEN ADMISSIONS

Connected Families Coffee at Chapin

Tuesday, April 28
9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

An admissions information session for alumnae and current Chapin parents whose daughters are applying to Kindergarten for the 2016-2017 school year.

To attend, please contact Deborah Carroll at carroll@chapin.edu.

Job/Internship Opportunities

Many alumnae and current students in Classes 10-12 are interested in pursuing opportunities in a wide range of professional fields. If you are connected to an organization with open full-time, part-time or internship positions, we would love to hear about them. Please contact Irina MacGuire, Director of Alumnae Affairs, at macguire@chapin.edu for alumnae opportunities. Any opportunities for students should be directed to Amber Bryant, Assistant to the Head of School, at bryant@chapin.edu. Thank you!

2014 Alumnae Bulletin Corrections

We regret that the following errors appeared in the print edition of the 2014 Alumnae Bulletin. The date of death noted for Louise Henderson on page 104 should have been recorded as May 24, 2014. In the same listing, the name of Ms. Henderson's interschool colleague was misspelled and should have appeared as Frances Taliaferro.

CHAPIN

100 East End Avenue
New York, NY 10028
Address Correction Requested



NEWSLETTER STAFF

Anneli S. Ballard
Director of Marketing & Communications

Mary Breaden
Communications Coordinator

Alile Eldridge
Content Producer