

hms school news

HMS School for Children with Cerebral Palsy | Celebrating 125 Years | Founded 1882 | Philadelphia, Pennsylvania | Summer 2007

Construction is Underway for HMS Expansion



With construction work underway, people involved in the HMS expansion project gathered recently for a ceremonial groundbreaking, including Mr. and Mrs. Francis I. Gowen and Nancy Harris, HMS benefactors whose names will grace the renovated classroom wing and new residence, Lorine Vogt, Capital Campaign chairman, HMS board members, students and staff and representatives of Hooper Shiles Architects and Gardner/Fox Construction.

HMS looks different in many ways. Plans to expand and renovate the school are coming to life. First floor offices are empty. The reception desk is relocated to the ground floor student entrance. A crew is already at work, and a construction fence is installed.

When construction is completed, HMS will finally enjoy a facility equal to its program excellence. Administration and staff have been resourceful in adapting the present building to changing needs, but constantly "making do" saps energy.

The new design will allow HMS to fully realize program goals and to provide services for additional students.

Undertaking its first major building renovation since the 1960's, HMS retained Hooper Shiles Architects of Wayne, PA after defining future facilities needs as part of the Board of Trustees' study of strategic initiatives.

In 1960, the oldest students at HMS were 12, and their disabilities were much less severe than those of current students. Today

HMS serves young people up to age 21 who have significant disabilities and complex medical issues. Computers are now integral to the program. Classrooms, therapy areas and living spaces need to accommodate more equipment. HMS's new building scheme responds well to all of these challenges.

Anne Wilmerding, president of the Board of Trustees said, "Looking toward our 125th anniversary, it seems a fitting time for this project. Historically HMS has been responsive to the changing requirements of children and our community. These improvements will allow us to better serve youngsters with cerebral palsy well into the future."

Renovations to the current residence wing will create additional and enlarged classrooms for diverse group activities, with adjacent private bathrooms and changing rooms, and amenities such as a new creative arts room with natural light. These spaces will also provide the structure for state-of-the-art therapeutic devices and equipment. The newly renovated space will be named the Gowen Classroom Wing for the Gowen family, whose ancestor was one of HMS's found-

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HMS Receives \$1 Million for Capital Campaign



Dorrance Hamilton donated \$1 million to HMS's capital campaign in tribute to Nancy Harris. While visiting HMS, Mrs. Hamilton is pictured with (from left) board members Lorine Vogt, campaign chairwoman, and Nancy Harris and HMS director Diane Gallagher. They hold an architectural rendering of Harris Hall, the new student residence.

HMS has received \$1 million from The Dorrance H. Hamilton Charitable Trust for its Capital Campaign: *Meeting New Challenges* to expand and renovate the school's facilities.

Mrs. Hamilton made this gift in honor of her friend, Nancy G. Harris, a familiar and much loved figure at HMS who has worked on behalf of the school for over 50 years, including fifteen years as chairman of the Women's Committee and eight years as president of the board.

Lorine E. Vogt, chairman of the campaign, said of Mrs. Hamilton's visit to HMS, "I believe she was greatly moved and thoroughly impressed by the level of individual attention each student receives and the wonderful programming available."

Over the past year, the campaign committee has met with representatives of charitable foundations and other potential donors in the community. Given a strong foundation, the campaign is now entering its public phase, soliciting a broader audience.

HMS Sports a New Look



HMS has a new logo! And the newsletter looks different, too. In planning for updated facilities, it's time to give our public face a make-over.

Our new logo reflects much of what we'd like to say about HMS. It's fresh and warm. It projects a more contemporary feel, in line with the school's state-of-the-art

programs. It speaks of youth, potential, life and development—when the logo appears in two colors, the leaves are a light green, the color of early spring. The tree also brings to mind the park-like environment of our beautiful campus.

We wanted our outside to better reflect what goes on inside. We hope you like the change.





Director's Message

By Diane L. Gallagher, PhD

As our long-planned renovations get under way, I'm focused on how much thought went into making this wonderful project a reality. Our facilities were inadequate—we adapted, and then we adapted some more. Two and a half years ago, Anne Wilmerding, board president, and Doug Clemens, vice president and chairman of the facilities committee, led a careful study of various options and their feasibility.

We examined priorities. We knew that we wanted

- more space throughout the school
- a residence better suited to young adults as well as children and separate from the hubbub of daily school activities
- to serve an increased number of students
- a facility that matches our outstanding programs and nursing care
- a facility that lets us devote all of our energies to the program, not to logistics.

The board engaged in broad debate about ways to fund this significant building program. We had never mounted a major fundraising effort, but we trusted that our many friends and supporters would want to help. And so, the board committed to realizing this project. We encourage all of you to support this effort on behalf of our present students and those to come.

Looking ahead to next year and celebrating the school's 125th anniversary, we anticipate disruption and inconvenience. Already, offices are displaced, the Baltimore Avenue entrance is closed and other spaces are blocked off. But as usual, HMS's wonderful staff can be counted on to make the best of a challenge.

In September 2008, we can look forward to moving staff into new administrative space and students into their new residence in Harris Hall. The Gowen Classroom Wing renovations will take somewhat longer, perhaps spanning the summer of 2009.

We thank you all for your patience and understanding as we go through this major building upheaval. We have full confidence in our architects, Hooper Shiles, and in their construction management team, Gardner/Fox. Our 125th birthday will be particularly sweet when we open our new front door.

SUPER PHANATIC...

Shannon Ward gets an affectionate buzz from the Philly Phanatic as teacher Nicole Miller presents a certificate. Shannon's class won the Phanatic's visit in the Phillies' "Be a Phanatic About Reading" program. She and her classmates were top readers, having committed to reading daily at home with their parents for a full month.



Meet Our 2007 Graduates

Graduation time at HMS is always bittersweet. This year's seniors have each been part of HMS for well over a decade, integral members of the HMS family.



JUSTIN "JT" DYSART

JT arrived at HMS in 1993, captivating everyone with his smile and his keen sense of humor. JT has struggled with chronic, serious health issues that have made it difficult for him to attend school.

Highly determined, JT persists despite his condition and has participated to the extent possible in all HMS activities. He makes wonderful paintings, using his foot, and has learned to use a communication device. He loves to watch sports with his father and adores his twin brother, Mathew.

Staff have visited JT at home to bring holiday gifts and other items. When JT turned 21 this year, his HMS friends made him a videotape.



BROOKE DUPREE

When Brooke enrolled at HMS in 1995, she had a hard time attending to tasks at school due to medications. As her condition came under better control, she became more alert, able to respond and to initiate being with her classmates and one-on-one aide.

A highly curious young woman, Brooke is determined to explore HMS in her manual wheel chair and to check out what everyone is doing. With assistance, she can use a walker or a gait belt. Brooke can often use nonverbal messages to let the staff know what she wants. She has learned to touch some objects that motivate her to initiate an activity.

Brooke also displays a spark of mischief—she enjoys getting a rise out of people. Her big smile is well known at HMS.



Construction is Underway for HMS Expansion



Harris Hall, the new residential wing, will provide students with cozy space away from home, large windows for enjoying the outdoor view and state-of-the-art equipment to facilitate their personal care.

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ers, and whose members have served on the board continuously since that time.

An expanded dining room and new central nursing station will ensure more comfortable space for student care and for the many staff who work with students around the clock.

Harris Hall, the new residential wing named for Nancy G. Harris, long-time HMS friend and benefactor, will accommodate an increased number of residents. Living spaces will be grouped in “neighborhoods” for a warm, interactive environment. Each room will feature large windows, where youngsters can interact with the outdoors, and a front porch will offer fine views of the streetscape and trolley activity. Room design includes improved access for students and caregivers, better lighting and specialized lift systems to ease personal care and therapies. The new Baltimore Avenue entrance will be more accessible and offer a more welcoming face to the street.

To support this ambitious project, HMS’s Board of Trustees embarked last year on a Capital Campaign: *Meeting New Challenges*. Chaired by Lorine E. Vogt, the campaign committee have been working strategically to solicit needed funds. They employed a part-time consultant to assist the committee, developed a packet of attractive campaign materials and have recruited friends of HMS to help with solicitations.

“We are grateful to our generous donors thus far and encourage participation from all members of our HMS family,” said Mrs. Vogt. “This is truly a project to be proud of as we start down the road of our next 125 years.”

The largest portion of the expansion project will be completed by September 2008, with some classroom renovations continuing the following summer. While construction definitely calls for patience and creative reorganization, the end result promises to be worth the inconvenience. This is indeed an exciting time for HMS School.

Staff Profile: BJ Ganter Director of Capital Gifts

Bette Jean “BJ” Ganter arrived at HMS in March 2006 to help the board launch its capital campaign for expanding and renovating the school’s facilities. But she was no stranger to HMS. In 2002, as a volunteer with Executive Service Corps—retired business executives who donate consulting services to nonprofit organizations—she partnered with another consultant to conduct a school-wide assessment and to advise the board in developing a new strategic plan.

“Everyone worked very hard,” Mrs. Ganter said. “It was a wonderful experience. They really throw themselves into it when they commit to a project.”

For over a year, Mrs. Ganter has been coordinating capital campaign activities. She introduced new contact-management software to track solicitations and gifts. She researches and writes grant proposals and helps to draft solicitation letters. Last fall, when HMS was the designated beneficiary of the renowned Community Clothes Charity sale, she served as liaison between HMS and the CCC committee, recruiting volunteers and assisting daily with the sale.



Bette Jean “BJ” Ganter

Mrs. Ganter said, “I really enjoy working at HMS. I believe in what they’re doing. I already knew what the school is all about—the strategic planning process was a good entrée into its activities.”

Mrs. Ganter enjoyed a 25-year career with Sunoco, primarily in information technology. When she left the company in 1993, she held the position of Systems Manager for the Vice President of Administration.

An avid gardener and golfer, Mrs. Ganter is about to become President of her national sorority alumni association, with 130 chapters nationwide. She enjoys her large family, which now includes seven grandchildren and four great grandchildren.



WE’RE THE BEST...

Gregory Viola (center) strikes a pose with pals from Germantown Friends School—his partner, Andreas Bezahler (left) and Devin Wilkins during their recent performance of *On the Other Side of the Fence*, part of the “Something Magical” project that has partnered children from the two schools for 24 years.



Parents Corner

by Ilene Brent

I was at school recently and noticed various staff members cleaning out their offices in preparation for the start of renovations. It made me proud that HMS is committed to continuing to improve the facilities for our children and those who come after us. It's great that HMS is also committed to staying in University City, a wonderful neighborhood.

If you have been through a remodel, you know what it's like to have construction going on in your home. Time and patience get you through the disruption. I hope that as parents we can have the patience to allow staff to make the changes necessary throughout construction. Keep in mind that saying, "go with the flow." In the end, HMS will only be better. Unfortunately, Melea will have only a few more years to be part of HMS in this new and improved facility.

The program HMS offers is unmatched in many ways. At the recent Volunteer Reception, HMS stu-

dents who have participated in the after-school Walnut Street Theatre program and the Evening Dance Group treated us to a performance. These are very special programs. The results were heartwarming, and the performances brought tears to my eyes. In addition, students from the University of the Sciences presented a check to HMS for over \$12,000, money raised from the walk/run they organized to support these programs.

As HMS grows, so do the opportunities for our sons and daughters. During construction, let us be patient, go with the flow and adjust to the changes. What's coming will be worth all the disruptions. When complete, the facility will match the educational programs offered at HMS.

Correction

We apologize for an error in our last newsletter. Staff Achievements identified Mary DeLuca as a speech therapist. She is a physical therapist.

College Students Support HMS Theater Arts Program

Students from nearby University of the Sciences raised \$12,800 this past spring to benefit HMS. Proceeds from their 5K "Race for Humanity," held March 31, will support HMS's after-school theater arts program, a collaboration between HMS and Walnut Street Theatre. Organizers of the race attended HMS's Volunteer Recognition Evening in May to present a check and to enjoy students' drama and dance performances.

We thank these community-minded young adults for their commitment to helping others and their generous efforts on behalf of the school. HMS also thanks staff and their families, parents of HMS students and other friends of the school who came out for the event.

HMS School News Summer 2007

A publication of HMS School for Children with Cerebral Palsy, dedicated to reporting about student life, school programs and important events.

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HMS School is nonsectarian, admitting children from any locality without regard to race, religion, gender or country of origin.

The Mission of HMS School for Children with Cerebral Palsy is to educate, nurture, and care for children and youth with motor impairments who may also have other disabilities resulting from brain injury with the goal of assisting each individual in achieving his or her maximum potential. HMS School aims to facilitate independence and improve the quality of life for its students in a safe and secure environment so they can lead fulfilling, stimulating lives in their present and future environments.



DANCE, DRAMA, WOW!...

Amanda Long and John Bailey move colorful scarves in "Gesture Dance," one of several numbers their evening dance class performed during Volunteer Recognition Evening in May, while dance/movement therapy interns (from left) Julia Naftalin and Hannah Nolan assist. The dance evokes joyful expressions in response to singing and movement.

Melea Wise dances to "La Bamba," a favorite song, while Walnut Street Theatre outreach actor John Ray (left) reads her monologue aloud, and Taylor Fina awaits his turn. Students developed the monologues during their weekly after-school theater-arts program with WST educational outreach staff.

