



On Community Service Day, all four divisions completed projects for Caitlin's Smiles, a nonprofit organization based in Harrisburg that delivers arts and crafts kits to children facing chronic or life-threatening illnesses. All total, Academy students completed: 236 decorated bags (EC and MS); over 120 handmade cards (LS, MS, US); 71 foam bookmark kits (LS, MS, US); 230 sports bracelet kits (LS, MS, US); 64 foam door hanger kits (LS, MS, US); and 185 circle of courage necklace kits (EC, LS, MS, US).

Pictured here (from left): Cullen Connor '27 and Vivienne Connor '25.





THE PUBLIC PURPOSE OF HARRISBURG ACADEMY – A NEW VISION OF COMMUNITY

Hannah Roberts '16, Jeremy Duarte '16, and Brian Clark '15 climbed through the opening in the chain-link fence at Wildwood Park and Olewine Nature Center in Harrisburg, following the lead park manager, Chris Rebert. Carefully they maneuvered large potted cedar trees and plastic buckets of water behind them. They welcomed a brisk autumn wind as they began their work, choosing a planting location for the trees and digging large holes.

“One of the goals of today’s tree planting is to help reduce the sound of [highway] traffic,” Rebert told the students. “The trees also serve as a buffer between the highway and the wetlands — this green space absorbs the cars’ emissions and also beautifies the area.” The students chose to plant their trees next to those planted by their classmates last year, and they marveled at the size difference between the two after one year of growth.

It was Community Service Day (CSD), an annual Academy day of school-wide service, and Academy students were engaged in similar activities across the Harrisburg area, as per tradition. From preparing food for Channels Food Rescue, to providing mayoral election campaign field office assistance, to helping with a variety of service projects on-campus, students of all ages were eager to contribute and make a difference.

An understanding of the importance of giving back is not new at Harrisburg Academy, nor independent schools at large. In fact, Academy

Upper School students perform an average of 60 hours of community service independently each academic year, and these efforts contribute to a larger institutional commitment to serve as a “private school with a public purpose,” in Harrisburg and beyond. Since Albert Adams’ 2000 Independent School magazine essay, “The Public Purpose of Private Schools,” the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) has encouraged the collaborative efforts of its 1,700 member schools — including Harrisburg Academy — in the public sector and have propagated countless stories of the difference these schools have made in the world.

In his “manifesto,” Adams, a now-retired, long-time head of school, contended that, “Given the societal turf independent schools occupy, the considerable resources they command, and the powerful network of caring and influential people they attract, independent schools have the opportunity — and, I believe, the obligation — to do more than educate 1.5 percent of our nation’s children exceptionally well.” And 14 years later, this theme of public purpose continues to be relevant in the independent school community. Just this past November, education journalist, Peter Gow, wrote in Education Week that “to be a successful organization, an independent school must have a commitment to serving the community beyond merely educating its children. It must add real value, cultural and even moral value, to society.”

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At the Academy, this sentiment is expressed through three simple ideals, supported by the school's strategic plan and woven into its day-to-day classroom instruction and operations management: coordinating hands-on service opportunities for Academy students; providing access and affordability to a diverse population through a commitment to financing their needs; and serving as an area leader in educational trends that ultimately, serve the greater public purpose by preparing informed citizen leaders who demonstrate social responsibility, an ethic of service, and a drive to succeed.



Tyler Pollock '15 visited Antigua, Guatemala twice to teach children at the Hogar Miguel Magone Orphanage and engage in additional service work with Tree 4 Hope.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE: PHILANTHROPY IN THE COMMUNITY

"Students who participate in community service build character, a key advantage of an Academy education," said head of Upper School, Tom Banks. "It contributes to the maturing process and encourages children to think beyond themselves and to consider the needs of others. As they grow, students begin to develop understanding and compassion."

"When some of our Upper School students volunteered at the interfaith shelter during Community Service Day, one of the women really opened up to them," he continued. "She started talking about her life and the hardship she has experienced. The kids walked away with a completely different perspective from this interaction. Going and seeing those who are less fortunate is truly experiential learning — it causes students to develop their own thoughts and opinions and to discover empathy."

The Academy engages with the Harrisburg community at large throughout the year in many ways: hosting school celebrations and participating in countless field trips in downtown Harrisburg; joining forces with community groups such as the West Shore Symphony Orchestra for community performances; conducting food drives; and coordinating countless hands-on opportunities through the school's Centers for Experiential Learning & Innovation. Opportunities such as these allow students to go a step beyond participation — they help students identify their particular areas of passion and, possibly, impact their futures.

Academy junior, Tyler Pollock '15 has quickly found his niche in service work. Pollock feels that service is a "good thing to do." He has twice visited Antigua, Guatemala, teaching children at the Hogar Miguel Magone Orphanage and spending time at the Santiago Atitlan Elder Center nearby. On these visits, he has also delivered donated school supplies and shoes, and has assisted with administering vaccinations. Back in the United States, Pollock continues his connection to Guatemala, volunteering with the Tree 4 Hope Turkey Day 5K, a race from which proceeds are used to buy Christmas gifts and holiday meals for the orphanage and elder center.

Banks, who is a trustee of the board of a local Rotary International

chapter (a civic-minded organization that gives back at the international level), believes in the value of lifelong philanthropy. He sees the advantage of viewing schools as transforming institutions that measure their success by the extent to which their graduates contribute positively to the world, and takes pride in the philanthropic efforts of the Academy's own alumni, such as Carl Marshall '65. The 2013 Service to Humanity award recipient, Marshall demonstrates how the seeds of service, planted within him when he was an Upper School student and voted class treasurer, can grow into adult action. Now retired, Marshall dedicated 42 years of his life to the vocational rehabilitation field, mentoring people in transition and volunteering his time with several industry- and community-related organizations.

"Whatever you choose to do, you are investing in your community," Marshall said when addressing students during his award acceptance speech. "You can find volunteer work that is interesting, fun, and stimulates your mind. Giving back gives you balance in your life and brings you something very personal as an individual."

AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE: ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY FOR THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY

As a school that is comprised of 35 percent ethnic and international diversity, the Academy is also committed to making its high-quality, globally focused education — the only one like it in the Harrisburg area — a viable option to all students, from those living in Perry County to those who call South Korea home. Such a diverse group of families leads to a learning environment that encourages understanding and acceptance of all people.

"Educating students in an environment that is globally aware and celebrates multiculturalism and diversity is an important core value of our school and all independent schools," said Jessica Warren, director of admission and marketing. "The Academy serves families of so many different backgrounds — and by providing the means to open our doors to all interested in this experience, we increase the entire Harrisburg region's educational profile."

Each year, the Academy allocates approximately \$1 million of need-based financial aid for approximately 30 percent of its enrolled students. This aid is subsidized through several sources, most notably, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's annual Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program and a sizable grant from the Donald B. and Dorothy L. Stabler Foundation. EITC gives businesses the opportunity to designate their tax credits, with the recipient receiving up to 90 percent of the contribution in cash. Independent schools such as the Academy are then able to provide this money to families of need that are interested in an a private school education for their children.

Metro Bank vice president and senior commercial loan officer, Colleen Ensinger, can attest to the program's community impact. The bank is a strong supporter of EITC and through it, Harrisburg Academy. "We believe in supporting the community — and we believe in the Academy and its institutional goals," she said. Ensinger's daughter, Jamie, attended the Academy for seven years and thrived. As a parent, Ensinger appreciated her daughter's small classes, personalized instruction, hands-on music training, and exposure to cultural diversity. "This, too, is what our bank believes in, and EITC is our opportunity to demonstrate that what the Academy does is wonderful. It was and still is a pleasure to be associated with Harrisburg Academy," she said.

The generosity of community organizations and individuals bequeathing funds to the school has enabled the Academy to offer five distinct merit scholarship programs in addition to its need-based scholarships and financial-aid: the Community Scholars Program, the George C. Hoopy '26 Scholarship, the Spong Family Scholarship, the IB Scholarship for Summer Study, and a number of Corporate Partner Merit Scholarships.

“We serve students from every neighborhood in the city and suburbs of Harrisburg and beyond. Our students hail from 6 counties and 27 school districts. While gaining admission to the Academy demands a certain level of student aptitude, no one need hesitate to apply due to financial constraints,” Warren said.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEAD: IMPACTING THE EVOLUTION OF SOUTHCENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA EDUCATION

Contributing to the broader advancement of education is the other major component of the Academy’s public purpose. In an era in which public schools are driven by prescribed curricula, standardized tests, and normative standards, the Academy’s community-minded mission drives out-of-the-box thinking and progressive teaching practices.

For one, the school’s Information Technology Services (ITS) Office provides all students, Kindergarten through 12th grade, with direct access to state-of-the-art classroom technology and encourages students to efficiently incorporate technology into their daily lives at school. From the integration of personal student technology to the inclusion of SMARTBoards in 100 percent of Academy classrooms, the effective use of technology is a priority at the Academy — and essential decisions in these areas have been consistently years ahead of other area schools.

In August 2011, Harrisburg Academy pioneered its Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program, being one of the first schools in the area to embrace the philosophy. Students in 7th through 12th grade are required to bring their own device — laptops, netbooks, or tablets — to school every day. They find having high-speed wireless internet on their personal laptops convenient, and the faculty appreciates that access to technology not only allows students more flexibility in the classroom, but encourages organization, responsibility, and efficiency.

“We continue to promote the active part of education... to have our students actually creating things and collaborating with others, not just consuming information on the internet,” said director of ITS, Bob Bell. “We took the lead on BYOD in the area, and continue to serve as a source of knowledge about implementation challenges and successes.”

Bell is pleased to share his knowledge with industry colleagues, providing input to improve programs across the region. BYOD has been a hot topic, and one in which Bell is the area expert. He participates in monthly Technology Advisory Council meetings with the Capital Area Intermediate Unit and was interviewed twice by NetAssets magazine about BYOD. In 2011, he presented “Beyond the Classroom with Simple One-to-One BYOD” to 40 attendees at the Pennsylvania Educational Technology Expo & Conference in Hershey. This annual conference invites technology professionals from all Pennsylvania schools to attend, collaborate, and learn.

The Academy’s Spring College Fair is another area of expertise in which the Academy is generous to the local community with its knowledge and resources. As the flagship program in the Upper School, the Academy’s College Counseling Office invests significant time and resources into the fair. The annual event welcomes more than 100 representatives from as many colleges on-campus and is free for attendees. All area students are invited to participate, and the Academy welcomes students from the largest and smallest public, parochial, boarding, charter, cyber, and “home” schools each year.

Milton Hershey School invites its top 50 sophomores, based on grade point average, to attend the Academy’s Spring College Fair, said Abbey Wascovich, college & career counselor at Milton Hershey School. Students value the opportunity to attend the fair because of the large number and different types of top colleges and universities that attend.

“We love so many things about this fair,” Wascovich said. “The folders the Academy provides to the students make them feel special. And I think

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Top: Amber Hilbish '17 and C.J. Porterfield '16 prepared food at Channels Food Rescue on Community Service Day.

Bottom: Raliek Lowe '19 harvested vegetables in the Academy's on-campus garden.





Metro Bank supports Harrisburg Academy through the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's EITC program. The program gives businesses the opportunity to designate their tax credits, with the recipient receiving up to 90 percent of the contribution. The Academy uses this money to fund scholarships for students in need. Pictured here, from left (back): Linsai Jackson '21, TaChae Range '18, Colleen Ensinger, Rachel Duong '15, Evan Shea '16, Jim Newman, and Amber Hilbish '17; (front) Eli Dragas '24 and Jodi Bezanilla.

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the 'college cue card' — with a list of questions to ask representatives — is a really helpful handout, giving our students a starting point when they encounter an admissions representative for the first time."

A committee of Academy administrators and parents work to put on the best, most relevant event, responding as the world changes. In a college search environment that is growing more competitive by the year, "face time" with representatives — especially from top-tier colleges — is an important benefit of the Academy's fair. But it all starts with getting the right people in the room.

"We have worked to make our event more successful each year by utilizing technology," said former director of college counseling, Giulia Rinaldis Hollister. "Our updated college fair website includes easy online registration for representatives and students and a coordinated email communications schedule to complement our snail mail notification strategy. We also use these tools to develop relationships with new representatives and leverage the existing connections of the Academy community to bring in more and more top schools," she said.

And the outcomes are tangible — said alumnus Teddy Jones '13. Jones attends the University of Alabama as a direct result of the Spring College Fair. As a junior, he attended the fair and had a beneficial conversation with the University of Alabama representative. It was here where he also

learned about Alabama's many scholarships, two of which he received — a Presidential Scholarship covering full out-of-state tuition and a School of Engineering Scholarship covering an additional \$10,000 for room and board and additional fees. All total, Jones enrolled at Alabama with an invitation into the school's honors college, paid internship opportunities at one of the most prestigious automobile manufacturing companies in the world, and \$101,800 towards his education.

Beyond Academy students, visitors from other schools in the region have benefitted from connections made at the fair. In Milton Hershey's Class of 2013, alone, six students were accepted to and chose to attend Lehigh University, a Most Competitive school as determined by Barron's Profile of American Colleges. The Academy takes pride in offering this top-quality college fair experience to the entire community, and recognizes the impact it is making on the lives of local students.

Now 230 years old, Harrisburg Academy is a true regional resource in Southcentral Pennsylvania. The Academy is proud to connect and serve its neighbors near and far — and its positive impact on the educational quality and economic vitality of the greater Harrisburg area is undeniable. By operating with this sense of public purpose and working to achieve additional ambitious community-focused goals as stated in its new strategic plan, the Academy will continue to make an impact.



TOP: In 2011, Harrisburg Academy was the first school in the area to implement a BYOD program, through which students in 7th through 12th grade are required to bring their own device to school every day. The Academy's Information Technology Services staff continues to serve as a source of information about implementation challenges and successes to fellow education industry professionals in the area. Pictured here (from left): Gwen Coyl '19, Katherine Trindell '19, and Kiersten Greiner '19.



LEFT: The Academy shares its resources and industry best-practice knowledge with the local community in many ways, including through its free Spring College Fair. The school welcomes more than 100 top-tier college representatives on-campus and all area students are invited to attend.

