

CONNECTIONS



SPRING 2014 ///// CLOSING THE CIRCLE



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Being and Becoming —Phil Moore, Director

I recently asked a friend what it was like growing up in a huge family, and without hesitation he answered, “it’s the only thing I’ve ever known.” Before I came to Upland Hills School, I had worked as a camp counselor and a carpet remnant salesman. In February of 1972, after teaching at our school for a matter of weeks, I sought and was offered a role so large and expansive that it had the potential to change the world and me

“All of my tears, have
become rain.”

—Thich Nhat Hanh

along with it. Serving as Director of Upland Hills School is the only thing I have ever known.

I know that this role has changed me, and I truly believe that our world is a better place because of Upland Hills School. On February 17th, 2014, some miles south of Puerto Viejo, Costa Rica, on a small beach under a thatched roof, fourteen people gathered together. My intention was to create a

ceremony marking the very moment when Rob became the Director of Upland Hills School. We were in Costa Rica because it is a place that Rob loves and a place where he has led several ‘rites of passage’ trips with young people. It is a place that honors and protects the natural world, a place that is home to many communities that are attempting to live in deep harmony with the wild, a place where people from all over the world come to learn how to live sustainably, a place blessed with rich and abundant biodiversity, and a place where new schools are being built with values similar to our school’s.

The day of the ceremony, I gathered all of my previous notions and imaginings about what might unfold and focused on them. One of the great advantages of traveling as a community is that at every moment you have the opportunity to have a conversation with a stakeholder. My morning began with some silence, a walk to the ocean accompanied by the unforgettable sounds of the howler monkeys, and a breakfast conversation with Lori Schultz. It was in my conversation with Lori that elements of the ceremony clicked into a cohesive whole. All but one detail remained, but as I’m fond of saying, “God is in the details.” That ‘detail’ was a question of what

object should I pass to Rob to represent a life of being and becoming the director of our school. Should it be a torch? A toilet plunger? A chrysalis? A pair of ice walkers? A guitar? A clown nose? A calculator? A referee’s whistle? Ken’s giant beetle? Or a surfboard?

As we gathered to form our first circle, I asked Rob to find a coconut shell and to fill it with water from the ocean. When it came time for me to pass it, I said it represented my tears over these past forty-two years. This Caribbean sea water represented tears of joy, and tears of sorrow, tears of loss and tears of laughter and tears that were still inside, yet to be cried, and when I passed the shell to Rob, he cried.

“All of my tears, have become rain.” Thich Nhat Hanh

Karen and I have been given a gift of unimaginable value: the gift of being able to continue to live in the house that Buckminster Fuller named ‘Upland Hills House’. We plan to live here in this beautiful forest for the entire fall. We are thinking of wintering in a community that is developing a new school either in Central or South America and then returning to Upland Hills House for the spring of 2015. Both of us hope to continue working part-time for our school. Rob and I have had conversations about continuing our mentoring relationship, fund raising, and spreading our story. My intention for this first year as Phil Moore-not-the-director-of-Upland-Hills-School is to discover what it’s like to have more individual freedom and less overall responsibility. My aspiration for the first year of this new stage of my development is to travel some, write some, empty out some, give some, and wander some.

In my new notebook that was handmade by Anissa Howard, I have taped a part of a map inside of the notebook. This map grew out of Ken Wilber’s “All Quadrants, All Levels (AQAL) work, and the part of the map that I taped into my notebook is called the Ego Development Stages. The stage that has caught my attention is called *THE MAGICIAN*. I love that name, the magician. My reading and thinking about this stage of Ego Development has



Phil and Gustavo



Robert Crowe, Lori Schultz, Alejandra, Ted Strunck, Phil Moore, Karen Moore, Terry Gardner, Rob Himburg, Shaun Piazza and Kathy Long

given me some clues as to my possible path. One of the traits of someone who resides at this stage is the ability to become aware of your self as a story, a fiction, an on-going creation. I like this idea, I know too well the pain that comes from identifying too closely with a role, and I've learned how easy it was to lose my soul in the process. Another trait of the magician is the ability to focus on expanding your awareness and on transforming. The way Jean Houston taught us this was to have us imagine what the butterfly of your higher self would look like. The most compelling thing about the magician is his ability to be free: free to play, free to sing, free to travel, free to be still for many days, free to explore, free to laugh, and free to fly, which is what we did on our last full day in Costa Rica.

Thanks to my dear friend John Swain, who built our adventure playground at Upland Hills School, I have helped hundreds of kids discover the power of zipping. It's a real world experience that acts as a metaphor for overcoming our doubts and fears. It begins with each child choosing to climb twenty feet up the tree, fully supported by mountaineering harness and a belay crew. The student then has to cross over Burma bridge, which is three wire cables spanning two large poplar trees, and sit on a platform while their student assistant attaches them to the zip line, then signal for a countdown and finally, *ZIP*. Our zip line at school is maybe 150 feet long,

20 feet high and reaches a speed of ten mph. In Costa Rica, the longest of the eight lines that we zipped was 2060 feet long, 263 feet high, and our speed was a heartstopping 50 mph. The probable zippers were: Robert Crowe, Rob Himburg, and Ted Strunck. The improbable zippers were: Terry Gardner, Lori Schultz, and Karen Moore. And fly is exactly what we did including the one probable improbable zipper, me.

I once heard Werner Erhard, the founder of the EST training, say that the smallest domain in human experience is the domain of what *we know we know*. The next largest domain is the one of *what we know we don't know* and by far the largest of them all, is the domain of *what we don't know we don't know*. The thing about a new stage of life and the future in general is that it lives in this last domain of *what we don't know we don't know*. I am so looking forward to this new stage for three reasons. First, I feel that Rob Himburg is the right person to lead our school at this time and this year of working alongside him has been an on-going confirmation of that feeling. Second, the last time I experienced a stage of so many choices I was on the edge of my adolescence and adulthood and I can hardly remember it. Third, I feel so much gratitude for my life so far that I can't wait to discover new ways to give, new ways to be, and new ways to learn.

I noticed that Rob had wrapped that coconut shell in plastic and carried it



First to zip...first one done!

home. It's on his shelf in the office and it reminds me of that Sunday in Costa Rica. It already has caught a few of his tears and I can feel more of mine about to be cried. Together they could represent all of the tears that we have cried as a community, and beyond that they could represent all of the tears of our ancestors and beyond that all of the tears of mothers and fathers everywhere, and beyond that they could represent the Ocean, the cradle of all life, the great grandmother of us all.

We live on a fragile planet that needs us now more than ever. When I was a student at Wayne State University, I first met Buckminster Fuller. He was 79 years old. I was captivated by his ideas, his vision, and his vitality. He was so dynamic and so engaging and so full of life and purpose that I became inspired – I couldn't wait to get to work. I was determined to help "make the world work for 100% of humanity without disadvantaging the natural world." In 1972 I jumped at the opportunity to do just that by growing a school. I have no intention to retire now. I have no interest in that idea. Bucky modeled what was possible. He showed me that by staying curious and by serving a huge vision, you could be forever young until the day you die. I aspire to do just that, to stay forever young by serving others, by cultivating a mind that is not fixed, by deepening my meditation practice, and by learning how to live with a huge, wounded, beautiful big open heart.

Transcend and Include — Rob Himburg, Associate Director

Transcend and include. I'd never heard that phrase or considered what it meant before coming to Upland Hills School. I've heard it many times since and I think I'm starting to understand it. When that phrase comes up, some of you might think of Ken Wilber and the Integral Method he championed. Others might just think of Phil because he says it pretty often. When I first heard Phil use it in the context of our mentoring year, I loved it without even knowing what he was talking about. Now I think I do. Transcend

“ Evolution goes *beyond* what went before, but because it must *embrace* what went before, then its very nature is to transcend and include, and thus it has an inherent directionality, a secret impulse, toward increasing depth, increasing intrinsic value, increasing consciousness. ”

and include. Two words that when put together can really encompass just about everything important in the life of Upland Hills School — an inclusive, collaborative, evolving, dynamic whole-systems approach to teaching and learning.

Phil and I realized early on in this mentoring year that for the process to work for either of us, it has to work for both of us. We need to collaborate deeply, not compete; we need to bring our perspectives together and understand each other — the similarities and differences; we need to blend creativity and innovation with experience and wisdom; and we need to listen to, learn from and love our community. We both must know and honor the soul of the school while creating and manifesting the vision for its future. And we are.

Transcend and include. When considered in the context of our school's current good health, this phrase is the perfect conduit for understanding where we are headed. At its core, its soul, Upland Hills School has been teaching and learning through love and the knowledge that there is genius in every child for over forty years. The methodologies and structures that evolved from this knowledge are creative, collaborative, adaptable and always connected to love. In the early days, the founding teachers and parents called this

“good, intuitive teaching and parenting.” It made sense to them. They could see it working in the beautiful laughter of young friendships at play, the ever-curious exploration of the natural world and the conscious, kind and empathetic young adults who returned to see their favorite teachers. For some years now, the brightest, most innovative neuroscientists are proving those parents' and teachers' intuition and common sense to be true. Whether reading Dr. Stuart Brown's work on the significance of play for cognitive, language, social and emotional development, or the book, *Spark* by Dr. John Ratey, it's clear that academics now understand that play and “sky time” are critical to cognitive development in childhood. Leaders in neuroscience and education have been collaborating to understand how self-regulation is most skillfully taught and learned. The acquisition of self-regulation skills is considered to be one of the most important predictors of healthy development in childhood. This makes sense; behavioral, emotional and cognitive regulation is critical in all aspects of a child's (and adult's) life. How do you teach it to children? Give them authentic choices in their learning and make sure the adults are modeling good self-regulated behavior themselves.

So, we are going to keep playing and



Guide Gustavo and Ken Webster



Guide Alejandra

learning outside. A lot. Morning meetings and afternoon programs at Upland Hills School will continue to offer our students a rich, diverse and exciting set of daily learning choices. Our teachers will continue to be awesome. I could go on all day about experiential learning, exploration of fine arts, imaginative free play, language and literacy, mindfulness as an academic skill and many more ideas at the intersection of neuroscience and education at Upland Hills School. But let's pause before moving on to acknowledge — right now, wherever you're reading this— the incredible insight, courage and harmony required for a school to remain committed to their intuition and common sense all these years. Thank you.

As a school that endeavors to honor the unique genius in every child, we take an individual approach to understanding each student's learning strengths and challenges across all domains; cognitive, behavioral, social, emotional and spiritual. In our small yet diverse school of learners, teachers continually observe, guide and respond to each student's development. This requires an immense set of skills that are always evolving. I am particularly interested in the idea of our teachers widening their ability to support language and literacy development in our students. This has nothing to do with pushing reading at a younger age;

rather it's about understanding and responding on an individual level to a broad continuum of learners so that each student can fully access their genius. Further teacher development in this area is already underway and will be a primary initiative going forward. Other primary initiative areas include: a direct and explicit approach to teaching executive functioning skills, vertical alignment of curriculum through morning meeting groups, the development of creative computer science and art courses, a new greenhouse classroom, workshops for our parent community, learning collaboratives with other schools near and far, and continued growth of our arts program offerings. How will we do all this and more? By keeping the soul of the school at true north on the compass and enveloping all the experience, knowledge and wisdom in our community as we make decisions and take action. Transcend and include.

Perhaps Wilber's Integral model is best exemplified right now in the emerging adventure learning opportunities at Upland Hills School. Recently, twelve of us teachers spent a week together in Costa Rica deepening our relationships to one another, to our new Costa Rican friends and to the natural world around us. We hiked (and got lost) in a jungle, ziplined across deep canyons, spent time learning and

tasting our way through a permaculture farm, surfed in the Caribbean and held a beautiful ceremony to honor the passing of the director's role from Phil to me. But most importantly, we made friends. Friends that are starting a new school. Friends that are living in whole sustainable communities. Friends that are just as excited about us as we are about them. Friends that want to collaborate with Upland Hills School around education, sustainability, community and peace. In June, our first student adventure to Costa Rica will give twelve young people the opportunity to live our mission first hand. We will be building friendships with others around the world in an awe-inspiring natural environment. Students will be inspired to think comprehensively, act with integrity and experience wonder in a new place. The trip is meant to be expansive and transformative for our students. We think it will be. It certainly was for us.

There are many ideas and initiatives generating excitement at Upland Hills this year. I have no doubt there will be many to come. I'm looking forward to more opportunities to share them with our community. I want to encourage everyone to share your ideas. Please help me continue to learn and understand the soul of Upland Hills School. Doing it together is our way forward. Transcend and include.

“ At its core, its soul, Upland Hills School has been teaching and learning through love and the knowledge that there is genius in every child for over forty years. ”



Remmy Tolliver, Rob Himburg, Zoe Kerchen and Jane Howard

Dear Upland Hills family and friends

—Tim Thomas, Head of the Board at Upland Hills School

For many years now, the work of managing transition has been a central part of the job on the board at Upland Hills School. As veteran teachers transitioned out of their long-held positions in the classroom, we relied on the groundwork of previous boards — who envisioned the importance of a ‘Dignity’ piece of our 3D Fundraising Campaign — and the visionary leadership of Upland Hills’ director, Phillip Moore, to help create a model where long-serving teachers like Holly and Jean could mentor their replacements, helping to ensure the most seamless transition possible.

Well, the transition theme continues. Two years ago, Phil announced to the board his intention to leave his role as Director of Upland Hills School. Last year, for the first time in the school’s history, the board created a committee to initiate a nationwide search for an Associate Director, who would serve a mentorship year before moving into the head of school role. About a year ago, we were honored by Rob Himburg’s decision to accept the Associate Director position.

Over the course of this school year, the board has been discussing ways to both support Phil as he transitions out of being Director and to empower Rob as he prepares to step into that role. I’d like to take this time to offer an update on many of the discussions and decisions we’ve made on the board this year.

3D Campaign Update. For those who may be new to our community, the 3D Campaign is a fundraising initiative that seeks to raise monies to support the areas of Dignity, Development and Diversity at Upland Hills School. Over the years, an important portion of this campaign has centered around the legacy portion of ‘Dignity.’ It’s been the school’s goal to offer financial gifts to retiring teachers who worked at UHS when pay was very low and no retirement savings were offered. This year, thanks to pledges and donations from members of our community, we have been able to allocate monies for the remaining retiring teachers and have, with great happiness and relief, declared that part of the campaign realized.

Global Staff Retreat. An important part of Rob’s background prior to joining Upland Hills School has involved organizing and leading educational trips which allow participants to experience and connect with different world cultures. Both Rob and Phil approached the board in the Fall with the possibility of taking the staff on such a trip to Costa Rica. In our discussion, we saw the trip as an important opportunity for the staff to get to know Rob on a deeper level — very much in his element, far from the Upland Hills environment. Our hope is that this unique experience will have lasting positive effects for our staff and our community for years to come. We were also intrigued by the fact that trips like these could represent possible new revenue streams at the school — especially for teachers. (Rob and Shaun are planning a return trip to Costa Rica with students later this summer.)

While we see the value in this trip, I think it’s also important to note that no 3D funds were used to pay for it. Over the summer, two donors made contributions to the school and, when asked, approved of using their contributions for this venture. In addition, the teachers themselves have contributed a significant amount of their own monies to make the trip possible.

The Upland Hills Farm School Project. When we hired Rob as Associate Director last year, a longtime friend of the school offered to donate approximately three acres of land for the purpose of building a new residence. While the board had interest in the idea, we also had questions about the costs and value of such a project. Through the first part of this year, a housing committee was formed to look into design, sustainable building options and, of course, the costs.

Since then, there have been some big developments. Most notably, one donor was so energized by the project that he personally donated \$85,000 toward making it happen. Phil and Rob have committed themselves to raising an additional \$50,000 toward the house prior to breaking ground. If that money is raised, the board has agreed to finance additional funds — probably over 30

years — to build the residence. The school enjoys low mortgage debt load and, with lending rates as they are now, we feel it is an affordable way for the school to add additional land (which isn’t taxed because we’re a nonprofit) with a highly energy efficient residence that Rob and his family can live in. Looking ahead, if we are in the position of needing to recruit a new head of school, we also see that such a residence could serve as a competitive advantage to attracting talent.

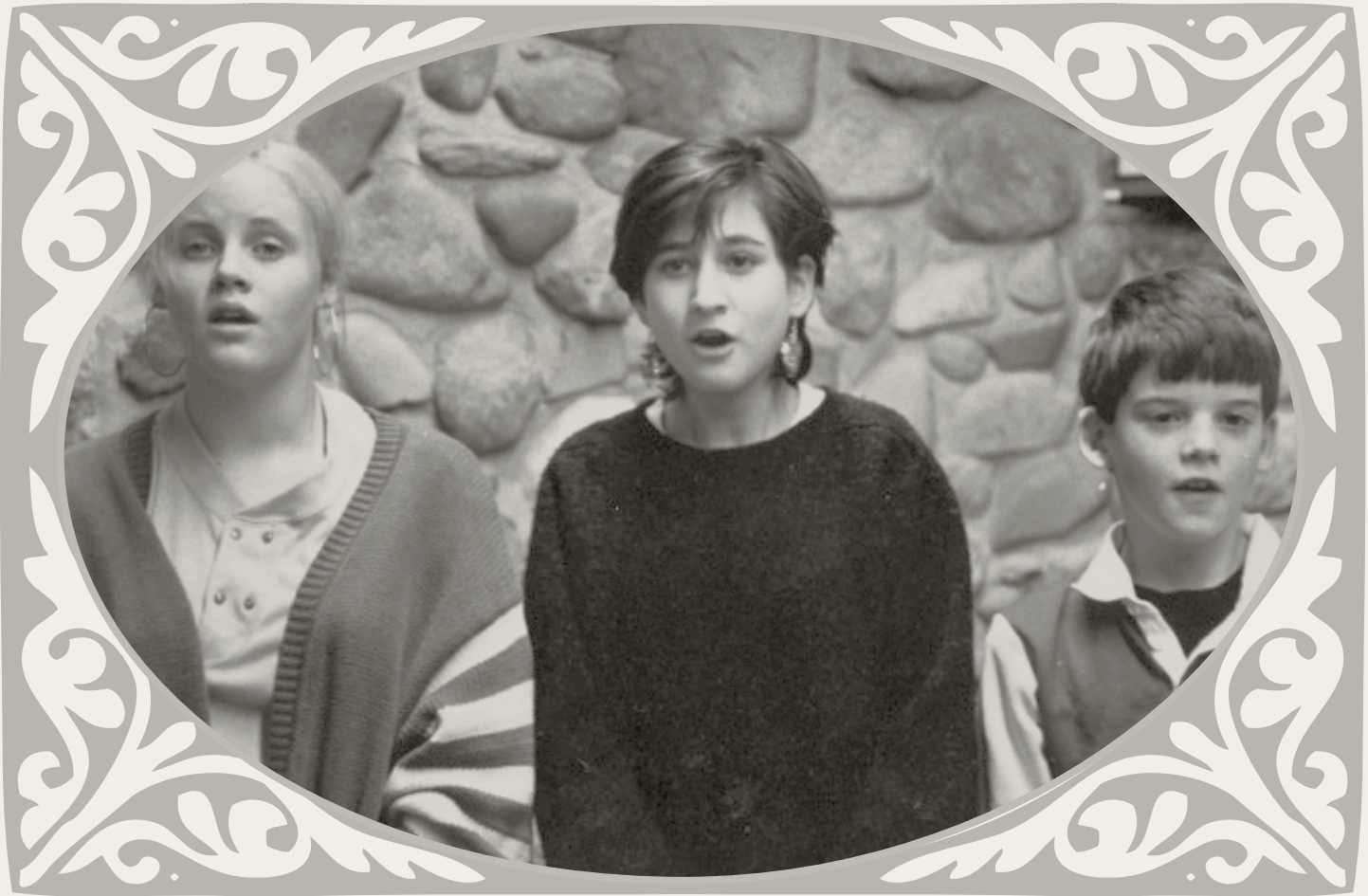
The Upland Hills School House. (So named by Buckminster Fuller, this is the house where Phil and Karen currently live.) After years of wrestling with this question, the board passed a motion in December stating our intention to have Phil and Karen continue their residence in the house for years to come, subject to a yearly review. We see this as a way of honoring the service Karen and Phil have offered the school, while also helping to ensure continuity and stability as the school transitions into the future.

In June, Rob Himburg is set to become only the second director Upland Hills School has had in its 43 year history. Over this school year, Rob has shown himself to be every bit of the thoughtful, intelligent and capable educator we’d hoped for. We continue to be excited about what the future of Upland Hills School holds under his leadership. To help insure this transition will be as smooth as possible, Phil will be serving in a support position next year. His job will include mentoring Rob in areas like fundraising — serving as a bridge between longtime friends of our school and our new director — while also functioning as an emissary on the school’s behalf.

On a personal note, I would like to thank both Phil and Rob for their gracious, open-minded and loving approach to making this transition possible. To say the least, the task of succeeding a much-loved, long-serving founding director is daunting. The commitment, mutual respect and friendship I’ve seen grow between Rob and Phil over this year gives me hope that the Upland Hills community is poised to continue growing and thriving for many years to come.

Alumni voice — A Community for life

— Nicole Goodfellow



Nicole Goodfellow, Sasha Moore and Eric Roberts ca. 1986

It has been over 30 years since my first day of school at Upland Hills, yet the experience is with me forever. It was not until years later that I was able to put into perspective how special Upland Hills was, and the real impact of learning concepts that are still unknown to many people today. I'm thankful for my mother who recognized early that I was not thriving in public school and found a beautiful wild school for me to attend. In fact, I did thrive at Upland Hills. My uniqueness was nurtured, my free spirit soared and my quiet voice was heard. It was the perfect place for me and I wish every child could have the same opportunity.

When you are part of Upland Hills School you belong to a community for life. My friends and I shared an experience that binds us forever, no matter the different paths we chose in life. Setting foot on the campus is like going home and while I don't visit often enough, I can

close my eyes and go back to the dome where we sang, played xylophones and were given the freedom to be joyful, expressive children. I surely never wanted to miss a day of school! It was my place of happiness, my extended family, where I loved the adventure of learning.

One of the most exciting things I encountered at my new school was the concept of decision making. At Upland we had choices! I enjoyed being in command of my electives and free time. I credit the early exposure to decision making with empowering me to become a person of action. Being human, of course I have not always made ideal decisions, but they were mine to make. I do believe that I always have a choice in life, and that I am responsible for the consequences of my actions.

Above all, I cherish the time we spent outdoors, where I came to understand that we are not separate from nature but a part of it. I loved classes that involved

time outside or spending my free hour exploring in the woods with my friends. It was hands on learning and it was fun! Mushroom hunting, animal tracking, swamping, all school games, working at the farm, solar power, and gardening were some of my favorite experiences along with learning about Native American cultures. Today, appreciation of nature is one of my strongest values. More than ever, it is important for me to take part in social movements that defend the earth and its inhabitants by using my voice and personal choices to make the world a better place.

It seems the seeds that were planted when I was young were definitely sowed the deepest. I'm thankful for my unique educational experience and that Upland Hills continues to teach children the valuable lessons of nature, community, personal responsibility and unconventional ways of thinking about the world we live in.

Looking Back, Looking forward:

What a lovely ride it has been and continues to be! —Karen Moore

I grew up in New York where theatre was a part of my education. I was a shy child, but was fortunate to be able to attend an overnight camp in Massachusetts' Berkshire Mountains. Theatre was a strong part of the camp program, and because we were in close proximity to New York City, professional directors presided over the program. I spent the better part of eleven summers rehearsing and performing in musicals. The shy reticent child I had been was replaced by someone with the self-confidence to step out onto a stage in front of a large audience. I received so much from that experience that when I came to Upland Hills School I knew I wanted the children here to have a similar opportunity.

In 1972, the second year of what was then called Upland Hills Farm School, John Yavurian and I began to develop a theatre program at our school. John had been acting in theatre at Wayne State and I had a background in both professional and educational theatre on the East Coast and in Detroit. We started out with short one-act plays that were performed in one of the trailers that constituted our school at that time. One of the first school plays in the trailer

was a play about the Inuit people. We created a sort of igloo out of sheets that encompassed about a third of the building. Costumes were a hit or miss affair at that time, with many misses. There was great excitement in the air as we proceeded to prepare for our production. At that time we had not yet gotten access to Indian Lake Rd. Staff and students backpacked in from Upland Hills Farm each day. The evening of our performance was dark and foggy with intermittent rain. It was also a particularly muddy spring. We worried that parents would not be able to walk in through ankle deep mud for a half-mile until Knight Webster called and said that he thought he would be able to bring parents up from the farm on the manure spreader. To our delight the first group arrived a bit disoriented, but otherwise fine. When we asked if they had come on the manure spreader, one dad replied "So that's what that smell was!"

After that auspicious start, most of our early plays took place in the dome. Our audience was seated somewhat uncomfortably, with the first row on the floor, the second row stacked behind on stools and the third standing at the back. We rewrote Aristophanes' play *The Birds*

without poor Aristophanes' cynicism. We did a production of *Peter Pan* using the tool benches for the children's beds, the ship and Peter's home. Peter was flown, or raised, by a pulley, attached to a weight at one end, with Peter on the other end. Unfortunately, Peter never knew when the student operating the pulley would choose to drop the weight. By this time John had moved on and our school and audience had grown. The EAC had been built 1980 and afforded us a bit more room. We did several more plays there until we began to outgrow the building, as our productions and audiences grew even more. Having tried to do a production of *Midsummer Night's Dream* outdoors in the spring of 1976 and having had an awful time dealing with mosquitos, I thought we could try the outdoors again in the late fall. It seemed like a good idea at the time, but the wind was so bad the night we did *The Little Prince* that it was hard to hear the actors. Still, the next fall we tried another outdoor performance of *Midsummer Night's Dream* and that time, we had rain, some snow and sleet during the day, and by nighttime it was quite cold. We brought in blankets for the offstage cast and had to send someone into town for long underwear for the fairies. The play was well received by an appreciative but frigid audience. The actors were, of course, spectacular. I, however, experienced theretofore unknown levels of anxiety.

Soon thereafter, thanks to donations from families of alumni, we were able to break ground for the Karen Joy Theatre in only 2002. I was touched by the decision to name the theatre after me, but wondered didn't such an honor usually occur after someone had passed on? (It took me a short while to get past this and appreciate the gift I had been given). Several alumni spent their summer vacations learning to apply the spray concrete used in the construction. We received individual donations in order to buy our chairs, which were reconditioned and originally from the old Palm theatre in Detroit. Another former student affixed those



Nic Navarre, Lia Cattalo, Lilyana Kubli, Simon Thomas, Alex Giovanelli and Sean Linder performing in *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* — fall of 2014.

chairs to the floor. Our theatre design was based on several theatres that I had visited during the previous year. My intent was to have a theatre that would work well for our children as well as professional performers. The loose combination of semi-arena and black box seemed to be the best way to go. Sound quality is always difficult to predict, but we got lucky.

Our theatre opened in the spring of 2003 with the first production of the musical *Heroes*, an original play that Ted Strunck and I collaborated on. We had a full house and a dynamic production. We revived *Peter Pan* in our new theatre but Peter's flying was still not very sophisticated. As one student observed, Peter's song "I'm Flying" should be "I'm Hanging," as Peter desperately tried to swing back and forth on a pulley system that had been only slightly improved. Since that inaugural year, our season has continued each year with a fall play and spring musical performed by our TPS cast, and a Jellybean Players musical at the February arts festival. Special guest artist performances are also included in each theatrical season.

Working with Ted over the years has been an absolute pleasure. His creativity and ability to draw the best from our young band musicians is exceptional. In the ensuing years, Jane Kline came on as assistant director and producer of many theatre events. Her comprehensive view of all aspects of a production has been essential to our success. Over the years, several parents and friends of UHS have helped design sets for our shows. In 2008 the incomparable Christy Meyer designed her first set for us and has been designing sets for us ever since. Phil has always taken a back seat to my theatrical endeavors, but has been there whenever I needed technical support. It has been a privilege to work with all these talented people.

It has also been a privilege to work with the remarkable children who have participated in our "Jellybean Players" and "Theatre Playshop" classes. Watching a child develop from shy and

self-conscious to a confident young performer is another great gift I have been given. Often, when I'm asked why this experience in theater is important, I have stressed the many aspects that are relevant to a child's education. Within the framework of a play we learn language that may not be available in our everyday lives. Memorization is a skill that is often overlooked in today's technological society. Also, being involved in plays that explore history and other cultures reinforces our social studies curriculum. The children also learn to explore the differences in each other and the nuances of relationship, since that process is also inherent in playacting. They also experience aiming toward a goal and achieving it within the necessary bounds of cooperation. Ultimately, I believe that giving a child the power that she or he will experience on stage in front of an audience of peers

and adults can change a child who feels his or her impotence within the framework of our present society.

I plan to be here as one of our school's part-time staff for a while. You'll see me in the library, in Ted's room and in the theatre. Phil and I have worked together for more than 40 years so it will be different without him at school on a day-to-day basis. However, I look forward to being a member of Rob's staff. I am very excited about the upcoming theatre programs. *Stargarden*, this spring's musical, is an original play that, like *Heroes*, has been a collaborative effort between Ted and myself. As for the near future, I have almost completed writing a new musical for next spring's production and Ted has started to write the music. And we have some surprises in store for the upcoming season. Hope to see you there!



Karen Moore and Ted Strunck

Q&A

— with Ted Strunck



Please introduce yourself, Ted. How did you come to teach at Upland Hills School?

I came to Upland Hills School 25 years ago. I was 40 years old and had been playing music professionally and building our house. I graduated from MSU in 1971 with a teaching certificate and I was ready to teach. After renewing my certificate, I began to substitute teach around Royal Oak. Usually, I was assigned to a middle school classroom. I often found these kids to be incorrigible and decided I'd never teach this age group.

In the spring of 1990, I began looking for a permanent teaching position. Janey, my wife, had volunteered at the Detroit Free School where she had learned about Upland Hills and she suggested I call the school. I did and spoke with Phil, who told me he had heard just that morning that one of his staff would be leaving at the end of the year. Phil asked me to write a brief description of my teaching philosophy and said he'd get back to me. He called me in for an interview and after that, said to call him a few weeks later. I remember being up at Wilderness State Park at one of their cabins and going into town to make that call. Phil asked if I was still interested and said the job was mine. I remember sitting around the campfire that night thinking and talking about being a teacher, and having my own classroom. I was very excited.

What are the particular challenges and rewards of teaching this group?

I started teaching at the younger end (what is now Kathy's group) and I taught that age level for two years. Just when I felt like I knew what I was doing, Phil asked if I'd consider teaching the oldest group. I declined several times but finally relented, and I've been here ever since. I've grown to love this age level because of their energy, their curiosity, their idealism and

the awakening of a greater consciousness. They teach me so much every day.

Preparing these kids for the next chapter is a many-faceted challenge. I think of the analogy to beach glass; how it's smoothed by the rough and tumbling sea. Like glass, many students come into my group with some pretty sharp edges. I let my kids do a lot of the socializing because a peer has far more influence than an adult at this age. There's always a big spread between my mature students and my immature ones. I give my students the respect they deserve as individuals and I try hard to learn who they are. I give them the freedom to explore who they are because at this age, they are trying to individuate from their parents and their past.

What are some of the most important things you do with your group?

I have learned a lot of things being a gardener and I apply some of those principles in my classroom. I've learned that in the garden, I can only encourage certain things and discourage others. I have learned to have patience and faith in each student's unstoppable urge to grow and blossom and become the best person they can possibly be.

Academically, I want my students to learn how to be organized. This is one of my meta-curriculums. I offer the expandable folder as a tool to help them sort and keep track of all their stuff. In History, for instance, my tests are accumulative. In other words, each weekly test becomes a study guide for a Midterm and a Final exam. My students soon realize that it's a good thing to keep track of these tests so they have something to study from when it comes to the Final. The expandable folder is also a portfolio. At our student evaluations, my students bring their folders with them and present their work to their parents.

Schooling is a language-based enterprise. The higher you go, the more language-based it becomes. My weekly curriculum is based on words and how they can be used. My Vocabulary teachings are based on roots from the classical languages (Latin and Greek) one year and the other year, I teach prefixes and suffixes – how big words are really just small words put together.

"How words are used" is my Grammar curriculum. I use the old-fashioned visual and kinetic diagramming of sentences to help my students learn all the parts of speech and how they work together to make sensible sentences. Another reason I teach Grammar this way is that these rules apply to all Romance languages – French, Spanish, Russian, etc. With these tools—organizational skills and a deep understanding of words and how they work—I feel my students are equipped for their next chapter in high school.

How do you help to prepare students for life after they leave your group and leave Upland?

Preparing them for life after Upland is another story. I have several themes that I keep in front of them; to be kind is the most important thing, to be honest is necessary to establish trust, to care about something that matters, and that our attitude affects our lives and all those around us and that we can control it. I want them to believe that they can make a difference in the larger world and that all changes begin with themselves. I want them to know that there is so much beauty in the world that they will never see or hear or feel it all, no matter how long they live. I want them all to learn how to express themselves in their own unique ways so that they may become strong in themselves and know themselves well.

Music is a huge part of my Morning Meeting. For students at this middle



school age, music is hyper-important. In my class, it is the most common sacred thing. I use it to teach concepts about the natural world and our place in it. I use it to create a communal experience and a spiritual bonding. Music has a powerful influence and many of my students learn to play instruments and carry that with them forever.

Do you hear from your students after they've graduated?

I get to see many of my former students often. They come back to school for various reasons. I remember one girl who came back after six years because she had never zipped on the school's zipline and she realized that it was important to do that. Just yesterday, a former student came back from Minneapolis to visit and she said it was like coming home. I've always asked them how they were doing in high school so I could fill in the deficiencies and design a better curriculum to meet the needs of my current students.

At the end of each year, my group goes up to Camp Lookout. I always have 5 – 6 former students (out of high school) accompany us. It's a great reunion and their help at Lookout is tremendous.

What do you think sets UHS apart from other schools?

Upland Hills is special because relationships are primary. Relationships are the pathways over which knowledge and values can travel. The deeper and wider the relationship, the more cargo can be transported. Here at Upland, trust plays a huge part in determining our daily actions. I trust that all my students want to do the right thing, they just need to know what it is and how to do it. And here at Upland, love is the ever-present guiding principle. We are all loved: teachers, parents, and students. That is the great lesson of Upland Hills.

Dear Upland Hills Staff,

Mike Farrug and I, Mike's parents, would like to tell you about a wonderful accomplishment by our son. As some of you know, Mike is transitioning to a private independent high school in the area. Mike is very sad about leaving Upland Hills, but at the same time, excited to go to school with his sister again after a 6 year separation (they DO get along, you know!).

Throughout the 6 years Mike attended Upland Hills school, we never had a doubt in our minds that Mike was in the right place. The school is a magical place, that teaches children with love, and recognizes the uniqueness and genius in every child. We knew Mike was learning life lessons as well as the "3 R's" that every parent worries about.

This year became a time to get ready for high school, and that included taking a high school placement test to see where Mike was academically. Mike was very nervous about this test. He never took timed tests such as the MEAP tests that 3rd graders start taking (really?). Mike's father Mike, a high school counselor, gave him practice tests at home, and timed him as well. Mike junior also attended a one day workshop at Bishop Foley to prepare for this test. Still, this was unknown territory.

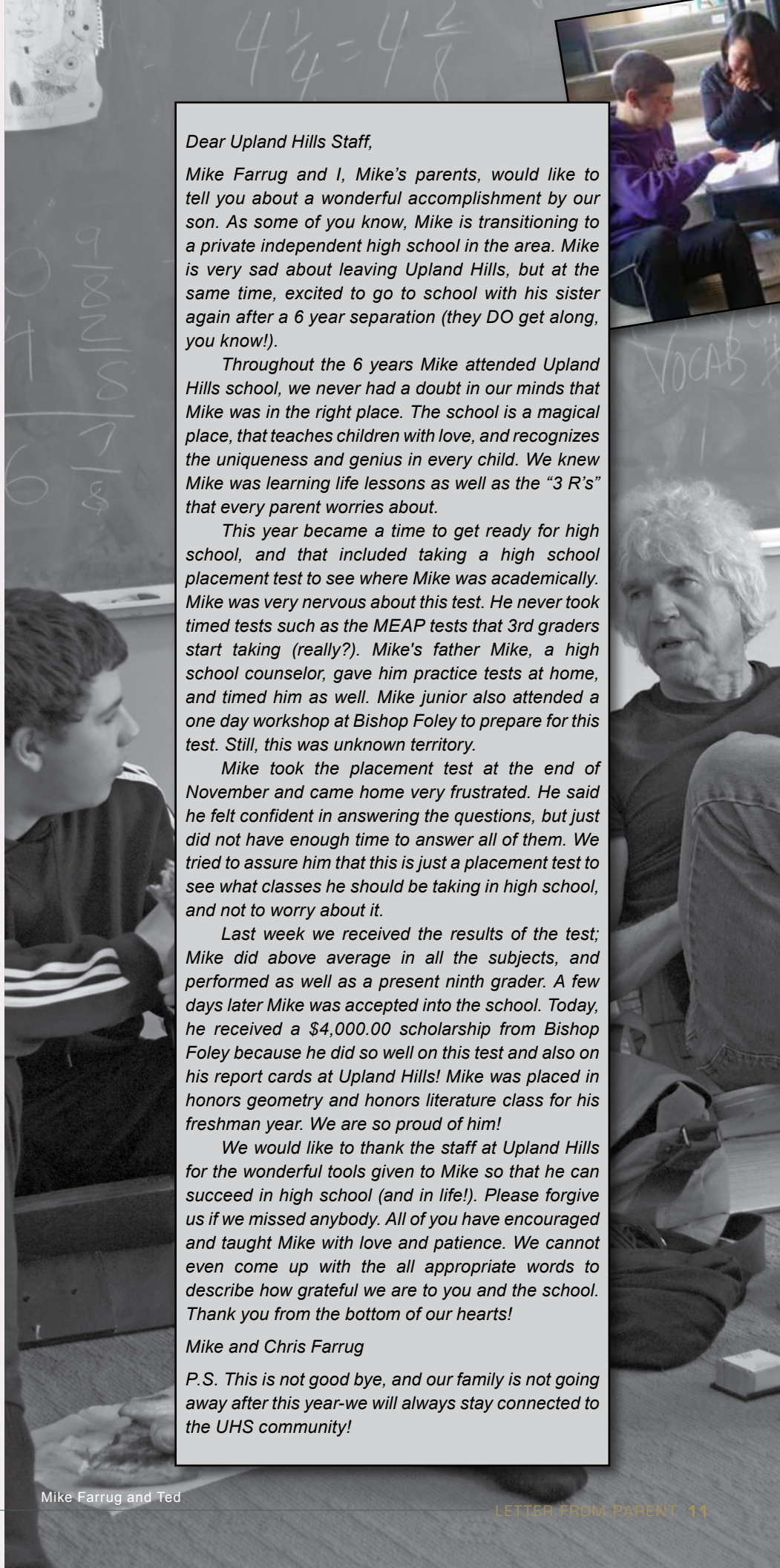
Mike took the placement test at the end of November and came home very frustrated. He said he felt confident in answering the questions, but just did not have enough time to answer all of them. We tried to assure him that this is just a placement test to see what classes he should be taking in high school, and not to worry about it.

Last week we received the results of the test; Mike did above average in all the subjects, and performed as well as a present ninth grader. A few days later Mike was accepted into the school. Today, he received a \$4,000.00 scholarship from Bishop Foley because he did so well on this test and also on his report cards at Upland Hills! Mike was placed in honors geometry and honors literature class for his freshman year. We are so proud of him!

We would like to thank the staff at Upland Hills for the wonderful tools given to Mike so that he can succeed in high school (and in life!). Please forgive us if we missed anybody. All of you have encouraged and taught Mike with love and patience. We cannot even come up with the all appropriate words to describe how grateful we are to you and the school. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

Mike and Chris Farrug

P.S. This is not good bye, and our family is not going away after this year-we will always stay connected to the UHS community!





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Contact terry@uplandhills.org for more information.

Go to our website www.uplandhills.org for Upland Hills School news.



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