



# MID-PENINSULA HIGH SCHOOL

## CONNECTIONS

newsletter - spring 2011

*A community for learning,  
offering students a  
stimulating, nurturing,  
safe environment  
that empowers them  
to reach their full academic  
and social potential.  
We work to strengthen the  
relationships between the  
students, their families,  
and the community.*





## A LETTER FROM OUR HEAD OF SCHOOL

As another year draws to a close, I find myself caught between reflecting on the past and contemplating the future. As always, this past school year has been a full year for us at Mid-Pen--sometimes challenging, always rewarding. As I think about the successes of the year, I feel on the one hand an urge to be optimistic and forward thinking. At the same time, I am aware that we are entering a time of significant change. But more about that later. For now, as I look back on this year, I am encouraged that Mid-Pen has continued to grow and even to thrive--there is much to bring us joy in the present and hope for the future.

You will see evidence of this throughout this latest edition of Connections. As you peruse these pages, you will read about our Spring sports season. The Baseball boys worked hard and showed solid improvement as well as remarkable sportsmanship and team spirit. But I want to emphasize the achievements of the Softball team, who, as you will read, went 8 and 2. In fact, this has been a banner year for girls athletics, with Volleyball, Basketball, and Softball all posting winning seasons. Well done, Lady Dragons! You will also share the excitement of our art trip to New York and our Cinco de Mayo celebration, which this year was observed on the actual day with great food, piñatas galore, and a real live mariachi band!

DragonFest continues to grow, bringing the community together for dinner and an exciting auction. This year's event brought in more than \$130,000 to help support Mid-Pen programs. The appreciation I would like to convey to all of the Mid-Pen community is more than I can articulate here, but thank you for your generosity, commitment, and belief in the mission of our school. (Reminder: if you have not yet made your gift to Annual Giving, please take a moment to do so now.)

As for myself, I am already well into next year. And I am acutely aware that we will open the year without some people who have played crucial roles in making Mid-Pen what we are today. As I said to the Board the other day, for the last few years we have enjoyed an unusual degree of stability in the staff. This year, however, we regress to the mean. In no particular order: Jonah is off to write his dissertation,



Lauren is following her heart to Texas, Marsha is going to devote her formidable energies to being a full-time Mom, at least for a while, Barbara is going to Sausalito to be Head of the Marin School, and Jodi and Judy are retiring after long and illustrious careers. We will not be the same without them, but I take encouragement from the knowledge that with their help we have built a strong and resilient community. I know that in the end we will be every bit as good as we are now. In fact, to paraphrase Joe Namath (whom some of you may remember): I can't wait until tomorrow because we get better every day!

Douglas C. Thompson, PhD  
Head of School

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 Eleanor Howe - *Sophomore Class*  
 Andrea Thurber - *Freshman Class*  
 Julia Lovotti - *Freshman Class*



# NEW YORK CITY *presents...*

# DRAGONFEST 2011



By Lauren Newby  
Development Assistant/Website Team Member

Once again, Mid-Pen is celebrating the overwhelming success of our annual fundraiser, DragonFest! In the vivacious spirit of New York City, our wonderful family of donors helped raise a record amount for Mid-Pen. With their amazing generosity, DragonFest grossed over \$130,000.

Once again, DragonFest returned to the Hotel Sofitel in Redwood Shores where guests were transported to the Big Apple. Entering the event, guests were greeted with delicious passed hors d'oeuvres and hosted red and white wines. This year's silent auction boasted a wide array of fabulous items including wine baskets, handmade jewelry, exciting get-a-ways, Giants tickets, spa days and much, much more. As an exciting addition to this year's event, guests also enjoyed two fabulous hosted bars where they could create their own martinis and margaritas.

When guests entered the ballroom for the main event, they were greeted with the bright colors of New York, New York. Tables were decorated with centerpieces that gleamed with the colors of a yellow taxi cab and the room had everything from Lady Liberty to the Empire State Building, and even a taxi! Doug Thompson, Head of School, kicked off the night by explaining the importance of Mid-Pen and its programs. Guests were blown away by the talent of our student performers, JP Esquivel, Matt Sowiski, and Laura Tuthall. After guests enjoyed a tasty three-course meal, emcee Renee Richardson of the KFOG Morning Show started the live auction. This year's auction was filled with amazing items, including a Giants package, a party in the San Francisco Fairmont Tonga Room, the popular Dinner with Doug, a behind-the-scenes tour of Electronic Arts, hand-blown wine glasses and wine, and even a trip to New York City.

With the support of our donors, we reached our Fund-A-Need goal of \$35,000! With the money

raised, Mid-Pen has purchased two new vans! These vans will help Mid-Pen support a growing student body, thriving athletic department, community service projects, and interactive academic programs.

Following the live auction, guests danced to the musical styling of Mid-Pen alumni parent Eric Dentler's band, The Jack Aces. When they weren't tearing up the dance floor, guests enjoyed the delicious and colorful cake, made as a replica of our New York invitation, created by Kathy's Kreative Kakes.

This year's DragonFest was another huge success. We would like to thank the sponsors, trustees, guests, volunteers, and donors for your amazing support! We could not have done it without you.

A special thanks to our DragonFest Co-Chairs, Lisa Braun and Kathy Esquivel, you are wonderful! We had an amazing time celebrating with you!



# A NIGHT AT SEA PROM MAY 7, 2011

By Julia Montgomery, Science Instructor



It was a cool and breezy evening when 84 students and their guests unloaded the buses at Pier 40 in San Francisco and boarded the Pacific Hornblower. Our cruise began with a side trip into McCovey Cove where we waved hello to all of the fans at the Giant's Game including our own Math Teacher Mike Jackanich, who was working for the Giants that night. We then headed out under the Bay Bridge and watched the San Francisco skyline pass while we ate dinner. Dancing began just as the sun was setting and we approached Alcatraz. The dancing and sightseeing continued throughout the evening as we cruised around Angel Island and the Golden Gate Bridge. The students, their guests and the staff had a magnificent time; we even had to kick some people off the dance floor at the end of the night! It was a fantastic event for our graduating seniors and has given the underclassmen something to look forward to for next year.



# MID-PEN STUDIO ART STUDENTS TAKE ON NEW YORK CITY

By Anna Wronsky, Art Instructor

This year's annual studio art trip to New York City was once again a huge success! Anna, Heidi and students Daisy, Greg, Laura, Anissa, Eva, and Richard spent three days exploring all of the top museums in New York City. At the Whitney Museum, realist painter Edward Hoppers' scenes of small town America were on display. Much to Heidi and Laura's delight the Guggenheim was full of Kandinsky's magical cow paintings. At PS1, Greg and Richard got into playing Feng Menbo's interactive video game installation while we cheered them on. At the MOMA every student found pieces to be inspired by – from the somber tone of the Expressionist painters to the vibrant colors in the Warhols. After examining the water lilies Monet painted late in his career, Daisy and Anissa decided to collaborate to create a large 3 piece painting for this year's art show. Eva, who has been working on a very scary painting of a clown this spring, was thrilled to see the George Condo exhibit at the New Museum of Contemporary Art. His "monsters" gave her a lot of ideas for future paintings.

Aside from all the art, hours wandering New York's bustling streets, and the pounds of pizza consumed... the trip highlight was going to see the show Fuerza Bruta. The show is housed in an underground warehouse, and during the performance the audience is asked to move and dance. There was little dialogue, lots of music, and a huge clear swimming pool that was lowered over our heads – it was a mental and physical adventure we won't soon forget!

All in all we had a fantastic trip – Heidi and I look forward to taking a new group next year!



# CINCO DE MAYO FIESTA

By Jon Austin, Spanish Instructor



The celebration of Cinco de Mayo honors the victory of an outnumbered Mexican militia over a superior French army at the battle of Puebla in 1862. The victory was unfortunately short lived, as three years later Napoleon III sent 30,000 troops to Mexico and took power under the guise of debt collection. For two years Archduke Maximilian of Austria was the "Emperor" of Mexico. Eventually the Mexicans regained control with aid from the United States. Today the holiday is more widely celebrated in the U.S. than in most parts of Mexico!

Cinco de Mayo is always a great day at Mid-Pen and this year's fiesta was no exception. The group Mariachi Viajero from San Jose played for the crowd to much applause. Some 450 balloons popped throughout the day, creating a lively atmosphere for feasting and piñatas. The culinary offerings were an amazing collection of burritos, enchiladas, tortas, tamales, aguas frescas and homemade flan.

Thanks to students, staff and parents who helped to make the day such a success!! I would like to give a special thanks to my Cinco de Mayo planning crew, Daisy Magana and Eva Calderon. Daisy and Eva are both graduating this year and have helped plan this event for the past four years. They will be passing the torch on to the next generation this year.

Muchas Gracias compañeras!!!!



# ANNUAL GIVING & FINANCIAL AID

By Rachel Packer, Director of Development

First and foremost, a big thank you to all of our donors; your generosity is critical to the growth and survival of Mid-Peninsula High School and the staff and students greatly appreciate your support. Mid-Pen is unique in many ways but the one thing that is apparent on a daily basis is; we really are a student-centered community. Students are respected, appreciated, loved, supported, and each decision made has our students' best interest at heart. And, they are heard. Students have a voice, they are the heartbeat of Mid-Pen and every adult that works here, from teachers to administration, will stop what they are doing to talk to or help any student. If you walk by the Head of School's office at any point, chances are there is a student nearby who will receive his undivided attention if needed.

Donating to Mid-Pen is not just supporting a high school, but it is supporting the values of community responsibility, respect, acceptance, and kindness that we uphold. Our students and staff live by these principles daily, and our strong, supportive community reflects that.

The fiscal year ends June 30, 2011, and I ask that if you have not yet made a contribution

this year, please donate to our Annual Fund. If interested, you can make a designated gift to our Financial Aid Campaign. 34% of our students receive some amount of financial aid, and each year the requests for aid grow. It is with your help that students who may not otherwise be fortunate to attend this school are able to benefit greatly from the individualized attention that Mid-Pen provides to each student.

I am happy to announce that we have 100% participation from staff and the Board of Trustees toward the Annual Giving Fund and we are eager to add 100% parent participation to that list!

EVERY DOLLAR COUNTS!! No amount is too small. You can donate by sending a check, cash, using a credit card, stock transfers, or make an online donation at [www.mid-pen.com](http://www.mid-pen.com).

Thank you to all for your ongoing support of this amazing school!



Annual Giving  
Total Goal  
\$260,000

Total Raised  
as of 6/5/11  
\$240,000



# HATS OFF TO OUR 2011 GRADUATES

Samuel Anthony Aiken  
Gregory Nathan Bloom  
Anthony DeWitt Briggs  
Arthur Salvatore Bruno  
Nicole M. Buchanan  
Evangalina Calderon-Arteaga  
LyDell Anthony Cardwell  
Abigail N. DeMay  
Alexander Stefan Dombovic  
JP Esquivel  
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Michael Hildreth  
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Jan Joehnk  
Garrett Johnson  
Lauren Katz  
Viral Khatri  
Taryn Sutherland Lewis  
Daisy Magana  
Richard Meier  
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Tyler R. Wilkins  
Reggie Williams  
Kellie Wilson  
Ian Wolfe  
Alene Michelle Wood  
Michael Connor Woods  
Xia Weiyi

# DRAGONS BASEBALL: A TEAM AND PLAYERS WHO STOOD OUT



By Justin Ryder, Admissions Assistant,  
Algebra I Instructor and Baseball Coach

Baseball is a game of brief stretches of excitement: a hit, a strike-out, a great defensive play, and let's face it, even an error can be exciting. And these moments are sprinkled into often longer stretches of seeming calm. We as coaches talked to the team all season about energy, and about how the sport of baseball can be considered a grind because of these downtime periods, and why it requires not only positive energy, but constant energy. Players give off this energy so their teammates know they're behind them and that everyone's in it together. Our team really took those energy talks to heart, providing teammates with encouraging words and high-fives during both the exciting moments and after a few otherwise eventless innings. A player stood out in this regard, and this season's Spirit Award was given to Michael Conn.

Coach Mike's collegiate baseball coach had a saying: "Baseball is a team sport played by individuals." The emphasis is of course on the

team, but if you're not careful, it can be easy to get caught up in the individual part as you're playing. And because it can be easy to get caught up in it, every baseball team needs a leader to bring the focus back on the team. And with this year's Dragons Baseball team, that was no easy task. We were fortunate to have a few players this season who not only led the team verbally by inspiring other players to work, but more importantly by their actions, playing hard and setting good examples. And other players responded, the best barometer for a team leader. A player stood out in this regard, and this season's Leadership Award was given to Anthony Briggs.

One of the most rewarding experiences as a coach is being able to watch a player in the latter part of the season who has changed his game for the better, and not only his hitting or fielding, but his attitude and approach to the game as well. And

we as coaches got a chance to see this happen for many of our players this year, and maybe more importantly, it's something the players decided was important enough to do themselves, taking steps to work hard at practice and during the games to put themselves in positions to learn and be successful on the field. A player stood out in this regard, and this season's Most Improved Player Award was given to Nicky Ritter.

The Core Values at Mid-Pen are respect, kindness, acceptance and responsibility, and we work to translate these values onto the playing field. Our players respected other players on the team while at the same time respecting their skill levels and often helping them individually to improve different parts of their game. A player often accepted his role on the team and was willing to be a team player; a selfless player, an uncommon sports phrase these days. And players often took responsibility for their actions and play, being honest with us about their physical and emotional health, and even their academic workload. A player stood out in this regard, and this season's Dragon Award was given to Connor Newkirk.

The Dragons Baseball Community came together this season, from the players to the coaches to the parents to the faculty and staff; and in the end, that's what stood out the most.



## LADY DRAGONS CELEBRATE A SUCCESSFUL SEASON

By Kurt Lange, PE Instructor, Softball Coach and Athletic Director

Tuesday May 10th marked the end of the Girl's Softball season at Mid-Pen. It was only fitting that their final game was an exciting, come-from-behind victory over Crystal Springs Uplands. Trailing 9-8 entering the top of the 7th and final inning, the Lady Dragons roared backed with 5 runs, then hung on to win 13-11. The victory was their 8th against only 2 losses in league play, marking the best softball season in the history of Mid-Pen! We did it with a high-powered offense featuring a nice combination of power and speed that averaged 16 runs per game! Our defense was also solid and pitching, which was a bit inconsistent early, improved dramatically.

We graduate six seniors, five of them starters: Eva Calderon-Arteaga, Abby DeMay, Daisy Magana, Melissa Squire, Kellie Wilson, and Alene Wood. Next year, our returning players will include Jen Cala, Hannah Jenny, Catalina Johnson, Rosie Johnson, Alyssa McKay, Vicky Rodriguez, Jessica Sanchez, Jasmine Thomas, and Monet Ward.

I look forward to another strong season with this group. Well done ladies and a huge thank you to assistant coaches Bruce Powell and Dayna Schiessler!



# Mid-Peninsula Education Center, Inc.

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