

THE COURIER

The Newsletter for Alumni, Parents, Friends & Benefactors
of The Miquon Upper School and The Crefeld School

CREFELD'S "TEACH IN" ON GLOBAL WARMING

On Thursday, February 5th, Crefeld students and faculty participated in the National Teach-In on Global Warming - a non-partisan, nonprofit initiative of Education for Global Warming Solutions (EdSolv) aimed at highlighting the recommendations of the President's Climate Action Project's (PCAP) plan for the first 100 days of the new, Obama administration.

Crefeld was one of only two secondary schools in the five-county region which held a Teach-In. The school's entire student body, grades 7-12, took part in the event, attending workshops, discussion groups and a culminating activity: a panel presentation which included [State Senator Daylin Leach](#) (D-17), green

building developer (and Crefeld parent) [Sandy Wiggins](#), environmental activist and lobbyist [Joy Bergey](#), and Green Plan Philadelphia representative [Robert Allen](#).

The panelists outlined what steps the city, state and federal governments were taking to improve the environment on the "macro" level, including seeking renewable sources of energy, providing incentives for the use of solar power, promoting the purchase and use of hybrid vehicles, and cleaning up streams and preserving open spaces.

On the "micro" level, all of the panelists – as well as all workshop and discussion group facilitators – focused on ways that everyone can make a difference to help preserve our natural environment: from using LED light bulbs to taking shorter showers, composting, collecting run-off in a rain barrel and taking care of Fairmount Park. Students at Crefeld already participate in a weekly community service project in the Wissahickon, the school's "backyard."



Photo, above: Students Dylan Davis (L) and Steve Maugeri (R) "make" paper by recycling old paper at a workshop held by art teacher Aaron Wiener.

Workshops held throughout the morning were presented by Crefeld teachers as well as Victoria Pearson, Saul Wiener, Jessie Bacon, Chris Serik and Aryon Hoselton.

Commenting about the all day Teach-In, for which regular classes were suspended, Dr. Mark Piechota, Head of The Crefeld School, noted, "We feel it is very important that our students become more informed about the issue of global climate change and learn how they can make a positive difference for the future of both the earth and humanity."



Photo, above: Parent Sandy Wiggins (L) discusses green building on a panel which included State Senator Daylin Leach (R) of Pennsylvania's 17th District, among others.



Addressing Diversity at Crefeld

By Dr. Mark Piechota, HEAD OF SCHOOL

At Crefeld, we strive to celebrate the varied appearances, abilities, perspectives, and values that characterize our community. The school has a Diversity Committee comprised of staff, students and parents committed to assuring that all members of our community are **safe, respected, and valued**.

The Committee works to promote an inclusive learning environment and foster intellectual, social, and emotional growth. We define diversity as “difference in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, culture, learning style, learning challenges, and age.”

The Committee monitors the school culture and programs to ensure that they fulfill the diversity mission, by:

- Serving as a forum for discussing issues of difference;
- Initiating efforts to enhance school culture;

- Developing programs that celebrate the diversity of the Crefeld community; and

- Proposing program enhancements to fulfill the school’s diversity mission.

Conferences

This year, the Committee has sent members to workshops and conferences, most notably the **People of Color Conference** sponsored by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).

Crefeld staff members Rod Stanton and Michael Hawkins attended the conference and returned with exciting ideas for new programs and practices to enhance the school.

In November, the Committee, along with other faculty members, offered suggestions about Crefeld’s practice of decorating for the December holidays. The discussions focused on respect for different cultures and whether our

decorations supported such differences. The discussions enhanced the culture of sensitivity at Crefeld and led to changes in the school’s December traditions. With the help of students, we made our holiday decorations non-sectarian, and we transformed the end-of-December student gathering.

The Committee also promotes multi-cultural curriculum development. This year, the Committee has chosen a theme of “**Connections**”. This theme was chosen to show how oppression, mistreatment and injustice often occur when people feel different from and separated from others.

The theme is meant to raise awareness to ways that we are connected and how we impact each other. The Committee has engaged students in realizing their connections to each other and to youth in Philadelphia—on subjects such as holidays, family gatherings, and other topics.

The Arts Show

With the Diversity Committee’s encouragement, the **Winter Arts Celebration** embraced the theme—visible through displayed artwork of students. The theater class focused on the flip side of the



Photo, above: Crefeld students David Jackson (front) and Madeline Smith (back) at the Arts Show in a play about prejudice and bigotry.

theme— on **disconnections**. In preparation for its riveting performance on prejudice and bigotry, its members kept “**race journals**”. This exercise awakened them to how often issues of race and racism are present in the world around them. Many advisories are now utilizing the race journal project this semester.

At the same Arts Show, the dance class created a **multi-media performance piece** that focused on race. This sensitive and introspective piece was a striking culmination of a fabulous event. Together, the one-act play and the dance piece raised student awareness of difference as well as connections, and through their performances, enhanced the culture of the school community.

LATE BREAKING NEWS:

The Crefeld School is honored to announce that it has been **accredited** by the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools (PAIS).

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Cool Crefeld Classes

One of the aspects which makes Crefeld unique is that teachers have the flexibility to be creative with their curriculum.

During the first semester, for instance, a number of different classes were enhanced by the creativity of the teachers, as well the enthusiasm of the students.

Teacher **Daniel DiMarcella's** physics classes held Egg Drop contests to see which of their imaginative designs could hold a fragile egg when dropped from the second floor of the school onto the concrete walkway.



Photo, above: Students Jermaine Clarke (L) and Trevor Sadler (R) check on an egg that was wrapped in a hoagie roll.

Meanwhile, middle school English teacher **Heidi Hoskins** held her biennial Poetry Café. Middle school and upper school elective students read from their

original poems and created wonderful chap books for purchase. The audience of parents, alums, board members and Crefeld staff were enthralled.

The upper school 9/10 Team—lead by teachers **Rod Stanton**, **Gena Lopata**, and **Daniel DiMarcella**—held a Roaring

Twenties Day which interwove their English, social studies and science classes around the topic of The 1920s in America.

And, there was the popular Blood Spatter Day at Crefeld. Math teacher **Beth Goldstein's** trigonometry

students and **Cole Bowman's** forensic science students joined forces to measure, study and analyze—what else?—blood!



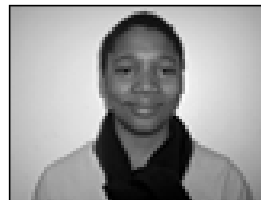
Photo, above: Students Ben Palitz (L), Sarah Ross (center) and Chris Lapp (R) consider the length and width of a drop of blood to determine its angle of impact (using trigonometry) during Blood Spatter Day.

News & Notes

✦ Crefeld is sad to announce the passing of former Miquon Upper School teacher **Paul Lyons**



(photo, right). Alum Lorraine Douglas Stuckey, class of '73, offered us this memorialization: *"How sad it was to hear of the passing of this gifted teacher, this wonderful person. When [I heard the news], I was preparing my social studies classes for this [Inauguration] Week. It is an exciting time to teach and Paul Lyons had been very much on my mind as I prepared for class. I want my students to have the same exciting and challenging experiences that I had in Paul's classes. I want them to question everything, to be observant and to love the process of digging for a deeper understanding of this world. I will always remember these gifts he gave to me."*



✦ Ninth grader **Kyri Brown** (photo, left) attended the Inauguration of President Barack Obama as a member of the Congressional Youth Leadership Council. Kyri

attended many events while in Washington, D.C., including an official Inaugural Ball, as well as speeches by Al Gore, Lisa Ling, Gen. Colin Powell and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

✦ Crefeld social worker **Jeff Darcy** and Crefeld's Director of Emotional Support **Dr. Peter Capper** are teaching an all-day Continuing Education class at Bryn Mawr College entitled, "The Embedded Clinician in the Educational Battlefield". The pair plan to engage participants in discussions about working systemically in schools, the utility of narrative and solution-focused modalities of therapy, and common issues that present in schools.

✦ Crefeld middle school teacher **Dan Cunitz** and Technology Coordinator **Sarah Blattner** recently presented the workshop, "Wikis: An Authentic Learning Experience" at the Pennsylvania Education Tech Conference and Expo. They both use technology in their professional lives. Dan's science blog is a "hit" with his middle school students—check it out at: <http://dcscienceworld.blogspot.com>; and Sarah writes a blog about technology in education at <http://techbabble.edublogs.org/>

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A special "Thank You" to all of you who supported our Adopt-a-Family project.



Photo, above: Crefeld staff and students dropping off the bags of holiday gifts for our two Adopted Families at the office of Northwest Interfaith Hospitality Network.

ALUM SPOTLIGHT ON — P. J. TOBIA, CLASS OF 1996

By Bethany Wright Ides, class of 1997

When he was a student at Crefeld, P.J. Tobia had a bit of a reputation for being outspoken. Given the context, this is particularly remarkable. Students and teachers alike marveled at how such an intelligent and engaged young man could hold such strong, conservative political views. So, when we spoke for the first time in too many years this winter, I had to ask: "Are you still a Republican?" His response, after a long deliberating utterance, was "...Libertarian."

Shortly following graduation from Hampshire College, P.J. worked on documentaries for PBS before pursuing a Masters degree in Journalism from Columbia University.

Since then, P.J. has been living the often rootless and sometimes risky life of an investigative reporter. "[Journalism] has had a tremendous impact on my worldview," he noted about the work that has taken him from Africa to Miami to Nashville, Tennessee. "I have seen and experienced the worst of these places and visited with their most vicious criminals."

And while his work involves witnessing what most are unwilling to, or maybe because of it, P.J. is grateful that he gets to write for a living.

Not surprisingly, P.J.'s genre of choice is one that is fraught with as many ethical quandaries as those in politics—the profession many Crefelders assumed he'd enter. In light of a recent mayoral scandal in my own town of Portland, Oregon, I asked P.J. what sorts of dilemmas come across his desk on a daily basis.

He reflected:

"Joan Didion once said that 'journalism was the art of betraying sources' and there may be some truth in that. Whether I'm writing about the relative of a murder victim or somebody who got ripped off by some businessman, I always have to keep in mind that my commitment is to my readers and the truth as I see it, not to making the source happy. This is tough because sources often welcome me into their homes and open up their hearts to me about the most traumatic events of their lives . . . It's hard then, for me as a professional to not call 'em like I see 'em."

His insistence on telling it like he sees it has perhaps been most vital on the international front. P.J. has been face-to-face with the horrors of the HIV epidemic in Africa and the U.S. led war in Afghanistan. He will soon be returning to Afghanistan where he plans to spend the next three years reporting from the field, embedded with the U.S. Armed Forces. His



last trip yielded an impressive first-person account in The Washington Post and he expects future stories to appear in The New York Times as well as some magazines.

P.J. said, "Journalism itself is the best job in the world for someone like me. It's like a magic key that lets me into all kinds of places I shouldn't be. One day, I might be on a ride-along with cops who are looking to take down a drug dealer and the next I'll debate immigration policy with a well known intellectual."

P.J. recalls his time at Crefeld as having been "one of the best times in my life, in no small part because of the people there and the encouragement they offered me." He attributes his experience as one that was pivotal in helping him realize that "it was ok to think differently." It's clear that P.J. has carried that conviction with him into every aspect of his life . . . eating it, sleeping it, though (we hope) not drinking it.



Alumni Updates

Wendy Garfield, Class of 1972, wrote in to say, "after leaving Miquon, I attended Bard College in NY, moved to CA, founded and ran a video art and performance space in SF for 10 years, then worked on political campaigns. Now I am a mom looking for schools for my kids in Silicon Valley."



David Greenberg, Class of 1983, saw "What Matters Most", a feature film which he co-wrote, premiere at a recent film

festival in Beverly Hills. David taught at Crefeld and now teaches at Drexel and the University of the Arts. He is married to fellow Crefelder **Marisol Vilamil, Class of 1980**.



David J. Miller, Class of 1997, won an award from the National Arts Program which has led to his opening an art studio/gallery. You can check out his artwork at: <http://www.NationalArtsProgram.org/~Millerdelphia>

Crefeld & M.U.S. Alums: Please keep in touch! We also publish a monthly eNewsletter and would appreciate having your **email addresses**.

<http://www.crefeld.org/alumniupdateform.htm>



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CELEBRATING OUR CONNECTIONS



Photo, above: 9th grader Jeff Rosenthal wows the Arts Show crowd by channeling Elvis (Costello).

It is 7:00 p.m. on a cold Thursday evening and Crefeld's theater is packed with students, parents, grandparents and alumni, all eagerly awaiting the start of the Winter Arts Celebration.

As usual, great pieces of artwork are displayed lovingly in the Art Room — lampworked glass, paintings, drawings, paper sculptures, and bound books. The theme of “Connections” runs through all of the work, as best exemplified by the glass pieces: all created individually on torches, then stacked together to create an even larger new piece.

From the theater, then, the drums sound and the show begins: live music and original dance and wonderful theatre performances

abound. The energy is electric; the event, as usual, captivating.

As produced by teachers Aaron Wiener, Josh Cole, Sara Narva, Hoagy Wing and Ben Arnold, the bi-annual event is a showcase of student work—the culminating activity after a semester of classes.

And, ultimately, it is an evening of laughter, tears, reflecting and connecting: all of which warm our hearts on this dark, winter night.



Photo, above: Middle school students (from left to right) Ori Ginsberg, Kristi “Micki” Stiner, Cassie Dean and Eli Halpern show what they’ve learned in their theater class.