

## IB STUDENTS SCORE RECORD HIGHS AT BFS

by Jeffrey Stanley

“We had eleven IB Diploma candidates in the Class of 2011, and they all earned the Diploma.” Head of School Larry Weiss was reflecting with pride on the results achieved by BFS’s IB students and his eagerness to have the Upper School build on those successes this year. He pointed out that the awarding of an IB Diploma is determined by a number of assessments coordinated externally by the International Baccalaureate Organization, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. “For BFS to be only in its third class of IB students – this is a steep curve of recognition.”

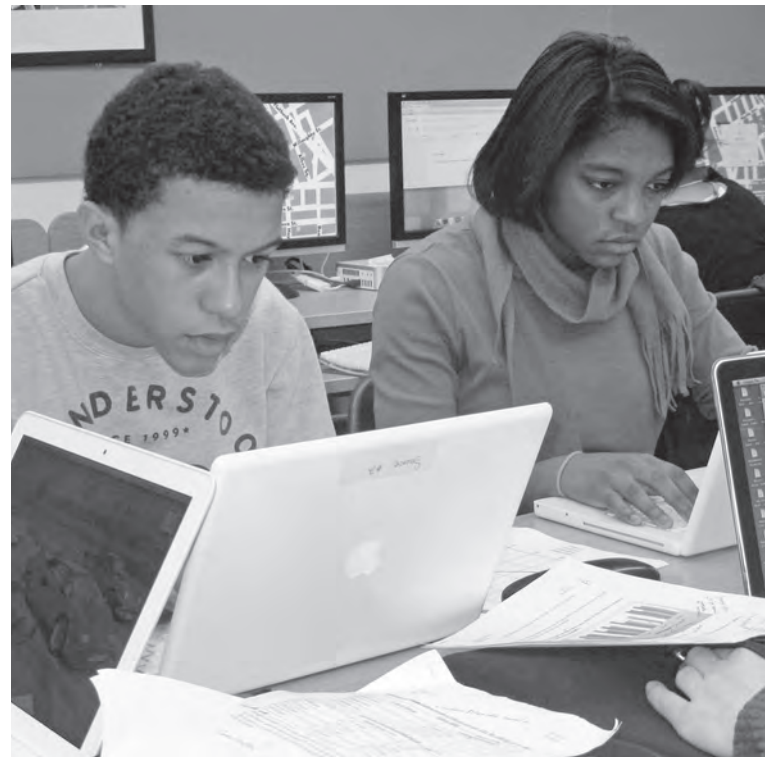
Trefor Davies has been our IB Coordinator for the past three years. He explained the numbers behind Larry’s positive outlook this fall. “We surpassed the international rate of high school students who earn the IB Diploma, which is 78%,” said Trefor. “This is a great result for BFS in such a short time.” Indeed, in our first two years of results, about half of our students achieved the Diploma, although the remainder were extremely close to the required level; this year we’ve leapt to 100%. Also noteworthy for BFS is the fact that 10 of last year’s 11 IB graduates were not newcomers to the Upper School but studied in our own academ-

ically strong Middle School.

The International Baccalaureate Program was founded in Europe in 1968 with the mission to prepare students to succeed in an increasingly global community. Today it works with schools in 141 countries. There are more than 1,300 IB schools in the United States.

Although the IB Program offers curricula for preschool, lower and middle schools, BFS is not planning to bring IB into the lower grades, instead remaining focused on IB’s program for 11th and 12th graders. Our juniors and seniors choose what level of involvement they wish to have with IB. Students who aim for the IB Diploma take all IB courses, and must satisfactorily complete community service requirements, an extended essay and a class called Theory of Knowledge. Other students choose to take individual IB courses as part of their regular course load.

Trefor described how our program has grown in the past few years: “In our first year with IB, students were generally either full Diploma or taking no IB classes. Now, our IB classes are popular with all students – whether they are aiming for the full Diploma or not. At this point, there is no longer a split between an IB



*The Upper School offers more than 25 (International Baccalaureate) courses. Junior students Avery Martinez and Janna Joassainte (above) use a graphing computer program for their IB Biology class this fall.*

program and a BFS program; this is *our* program.” Currently, about a quarter of our juniors and seniors aim for the full Diploma, and another half take at least three or four IB courses. “Taken together, this means that around 75% of our juniors and seniors are heavily involved in IB. The remaining 25% also take one or two IB courses,” said Trefor.

And while student participation is growing, our results have improved simultaneously. “IB courses are graded on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being poor performance and 7 being extremely good,” explained Trefor. “The overall international mean is usually around 4.6, and this past year we achieved that level.”

Analyzing the test results one step further, Trefor broke down their significance. “An individual student exam score of 5 is a very good result, and 5 is now our students’ most common score. This was a critical step for our emerging program, achieved very rapidly.

“Overall, our positive results are an important indicator of the strength of our school,” he continued, “and when we consider how all of our students are now involved, it is clear that all of our students are meeting the challenges of IB courses.”



**READ** more about IB at BFS: [www.brooklynfriends.org/IB](http://www.brooklynfriends.org/IB)

## MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL DR. LARRY WEISS

Last month, more than 20,000 runners and I had the pleasure of participating in the 36th Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, DC. I first ran this race in 1995 when I was Director of the Chinese Studies Program at Sidwell Friends School. Over the past 16 years, I have completed the race 11 times.

▶ Running and completing a marathon is a truly special experience. It represents a maximally challenging individual effort that takes place in an atmosphere of competition and support from a large and enthusiastic ephemeral community. While many of my fellow runners are members of teams or other groupings, I have always enjoyed running solo in the midst of the crowd.

▶ The crowd that completes the 26.2 mile course that begins and ends at the Iwo Jima Memorial in Arlington Cemetery shares several distinguishing characteristics. Many active duty Marines run the race, and even more work the course's water and nutrition stations and first aid areas. They also provide a wide variety of logistical and support functions. A large number of Marine Corps veterans and their family members also run, far too many of whom wear shirts in memory of a family member or close friend who has recently died in combat.

The race provides no cash prizes or other material rewards for the fastest finishers. This is an amateur race that proudly calls itself "The People's Marathon". As a conscientious objector honorably discharged from the U.S. Army many decades ago, why do I especially enjoy running with the Marines?



**"Finishing is, in fact, the beginning of a new phase of the ongoing process of becoming better human beings and trying to make our world a better place."**

This past Veteran's Day, several commentators pointed to the shrinking number of Americans who actually have regular contact with the active duty soldiers engaged in today's wars of choice or younger veterans. They asked their television and radio audiences, "do you know personally a soldier who has fought in Iraq or Afghanistan?" When I first heard the question, I thought that my answer would put me in the large majority required to answer negatively. But then I remembered that

every October, for five or more hours, I get to know many quite intensively, and that was a pleasing thought.

What are the lessons of a marathon? First and foremost, we runners learn how to confront and overcome obstacles and limitations with training, positive thinking, and faith. For those of us who teach and work with children and young adults, we continually seek to challenge our students creatively, and we take pride in their accomplishments as they go beyond their limitations and replace ignorance with knowledge and fear with confidence and competence. To remain the best teachers we can be, we must share the burden of such tasks by testing and challenging ourselves as well as our students.

We also need continuous reminders of the importance of following through—taking an idea to its logical conclusion, making good on a promise, finishing what we have started. Between miles 18 and 26 of a marathon, following through takes on new meaning as it becomes clear that deeper resources of energy, strength and perseverance are going to be necessary to get this particular job done. To fulfill the promise made at the beginning of the race, a total effort must be made to follow the well-worn path through to its end, one foot in front of the other.

And then, finally there is the end. One clever sign held by a spectator at this year's marathon was written in the

form of a biblical citation. Quoting the imaginary portion, "John 26.2", it commanded "Thou Shalt Finish". As my fellow runners obeyed this commandment, we all shared the thrill of accomplishment and its accompanying pain. Gathering the eventual strength to move on from the finish line, I believe that many of us realized that one never really finishes a marathon—or any of life's challenges—until life itself concludes.

▶ Finishing is an invitation to further change, innovation, and service. Finishing is, in fact, the beginning of a new phase of the ongoing process of becoming better human beings and trying to make our world a better place. As you review this Newsletter's accounts of the achievements of BFS students, faculty and alumni, and the commitments we are making towards our school's continuous improvement, I hope that you will sense our enthusiasm for making the 144th year of Brooklyn Friends School the best that it can possibly be.

*In friendship,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry Weiss".

# New Faces in New Places at BFS This Year

by Jeffrey Stanley

**D**enise Krenski is new to BFS this year as Assistant Head of Middle School. “I came into a division that runs really smoothly – the faculty are focused and seasoned, well-educated and eager – so I want to do a bit of observing what’s really rich and powerful about them and the division before I create lofty goals for myself. And, of course, understanding our students is key.”

A Philadelphia native who now lives in Brooklyn, Denise has a background both as a school administrator and as a teacher. She spent eight years at the Birch Wathen Lenox school in Manhattan where she was actively involved in their diversity efforts. The more she learned about BFS in her independent school travels, she says, the more interested she became in joining the faculty. “BFS has such a diverse community of educators and learners and a sense of community. I felt a sense of inclusivity immediately.”

Most recently Denise taught for four years in a public school “focused heavily on social justice teaching, which I love and believe in deeply,” she said. An alumna of Temple University, she has a master’s degree from NYU in Educational Leadership.

Also joining the faculty this year is Director of Diversity, **Eddie Moore, Jr.** Dr. Moore holds a Ph.D. from the University of Iowa’s Program in Educational Policy and Leadership Studies. He is a nationally recognized figure on issues of diversity and integration among students, faculty and administrators in our nation’s schools. He comes to BFS directly from serving as diversity director for the Bush School in Seattle, WA. Eddie has authored numerous articles, including one which appeared in the book *Brothers of the Academy: Up and Coming Black Scholars Earning Our Way in Higher Education*. A survey of the history and roles of black men in academia, the book offers first-hand accounts of how the authors have succeeded as scholars despite the odds against them.

Then there are the familiar faces who will also appear in new places this year. **Sara Soll**, who was director of preschool admissions for many years and a longtime preschool teacher, is the new director of the Family Center at Brooklyn Friends, newly relocated to 189 Schermerhorn Street. One of the longest tenured BFS faculty members, Sara is married to middle school humanities teacher Tony Soll; their two children, Jesse ’95 and Becky ’99, are BFS lifers and alums. Head of School Larry Weiss credits Sara’s entrepreneurial spirit, expertise and high energy level for the successful transformation of a 12-student program into a thriving, stand-alone, three classroom program for 43 children in a time frame of less than six months.

**Whitney Thompson** is BFS’ new Dean of Faculty. In this role she’ll oversee professional development and evaluation school-wide among other responsibilities. She will also lead this year’s Quaker Self-Study for our school community. The Self-Study has started with a Quakerism 101 workshop for faculty and staff led by members of the New York Quarterly Meeting, preceded by Robert Lawrence Smith’s *A Quaker Book of Wisdom* assigned as summer reading. Parents are now invited to read this book as



Top left to right: Denise Krenski, Dr. Eddie Moore Jr., Whitney Thompson.  
Above left to right: Maura Eden, Jonathan Edmonds, and Sara Soll

well. Related events are in store for our community as the year progresses. “Right now the thing that is most exciting about my new role is getting to clerk the Quaker Self-Study,” said Whitney. “It’s such an exciting time for us to get to explore who we are as a Friends school, what kind of Friends school we uniquely are, and what kind of Friends school we think we should be.”

Long-time BFS Preschool teacher **Maura Eden** has stepped into a new role as Interim Head of the Preschool after its founder Karen Luks retired from the post last June. “Over the years, I had the opportunity to serve as a teacher in various leadership capacities—a wide array of committee work, including School Committee, which is now the School Board,” said Maura. “I became fascinated with school leadership in general and with Karen Luks’ encouragement, I completed a graduate degree in Early Childhood Leadership at Bank Street College of Education.”

“I was excited by the energy, growth and movement that Larry had brought to the school and was honored to help in any way,” she continued. “I had firsthand knowledge of the faculty and the program and absolutely looked forward to such a wonderful opportunity.” Her concerns at work now extend beyond the walls of her own former classroom and to the nearly 100 Preschoolers enrolled at BFS as well as their parents. “Every day is different,” she said. “I still get to sing with the children when **Tony Soll** comes, visit the classrooms and read a story. Those moments keep me remembering why I am doing what I do.”

Another familiar face in a new position this year is **Jonathan Edmonds**. A second and third grade teacher for the past eight years, he is the Lower School’s new Math Specialist. In the Upper School, Math teacher **Julien Remy** has taken on a new responsibility this year as 9th/10th Grade Dean.

# Making Sense of Number Sense: MATH IN THE LOWER SCHOOL

by Jonathan Edmonds

**W**e are usually convinced more easily by reasons we have found ourselves than by those which have occurred to others.

– Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*

It's a typical day at BFS. On the sixth floor a class of Kindergarteners are busy sorting out a tub of buttons into different piles of similar buttons. Upstairs, the First Graders are taking turns hiding some counters in their hands while their partner figures out how many are hiding using the number of counters still on the table. Next door, in Second grade, children are carefully counting out "one dollar cups" of 100 pennies or 10 dimes or 20 nickels or 4 quarters for charitable giving through the annual Penny Harvest. Across the hall, Third graders are rotating, flipping, and combining a set of four identical right triangles to discover all of the unique combinations for arranging them into polygons. And back downstairs, in Fourth grade, the students are discovering the patterns in a scenario of seating a given number of people at a group of trapezoidal tables.

It's a cliché, but math is indeed everywhere, and in our Brooklyn Friends Lower School classrooms, you don't have to dig far below the surface to reveal a fountain of mathematical knowledge and experiences. What can to the casual observer look like "just playing" is indeed engaging and enjoyable exploration, and it is simultaneously genuine learning about foundational math concepts and skills.

Much of the mathematical work of a Brooklyn Friends Lower School student falls into

the realm of what mathematicians call "number sense". For elementary age children, this involves getting to know the lay of the land of numbers and finding out how they can personally orient themselves in this geography. Lower Schoolers work hard to learn deeply what numbers are, what they can represent in different contexts, and how they can be used to solve problems and organize information. Number sense includes addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, and the relationships between these operations, but it also involves constructing knowledge over time of the big ideas of math: the various magnitudes of numbers; how numbers can be broken into parts and be put back together; how certain numbers in our base-10 number system are "friendly" landmarks, such as 10, 100, 1000, and even  $\frac{1}{2}$ , 5, 25, and 50; how numbers can create repeating or growing patterns; how these number concepts can be represented geometrically, algebraically, or graphically; how numbers can be estimated, approximated, and measured for the purposes of problem solving; how quantities of numbers can be equivalent. The development of this "number sense" is a substantial journey with young children, and it is a necessary foundation for the more abstract and complicated math with which these budding mathematicians will later engage.

The above quoted words of Pascal, a French mathematician, physicist, and philosopher, speak to the heart of our hopes for mathematical experiences in our Lower School. Our teaching faculty



*First graders doing "hands-on" work in mathematics class (top) and Lower School parents working on similar problems in a math workshop held every fall (above)*

thoughtfully and purposefully helps children in Kindergarten through fourth grade make sense for themselves of numbers, operations, shapes, and logical thinking. We aim for our students to experience the joy and "A-ha!" moments of discovering mathematical relationships and patterns. We challenge them to be able to explain their mathematical thinking and work in ways that demonstrate their personal understanding, rather than copying a prescribed method without understanding how it works for themselves. We want our students to be personally and confidently convinced by what they have experienced for themselves in the beautiful and fascinating world of mathematics.

As the framework for our

scope and sequence, the Lower School uses the TERC *Investigations in Number, Data, and Space* curriculum, which is based on the principles and standards outlined by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. *Investigations* is grounded in a *constructivist* pedagogy, which affirms that knowledge is built personally by learners through experiences facilitated by teachers with an eye toward their developmental edge of learning. This published curriculum is also supplemented by our teachers to support fluency in the core math facts, a variety of experiences to meet the range of learners at each grade level, and problem-solving activities that that can integrate other subject areas with math. Our teachers also push their own

mathematical learning in ongoing professional development in and out of school to study new developments in math education and refine their own classroom practices.

Mathematics is a framework through which to organize and analyze the world, using a unique language of numbers, symbols, graphs, pictures, and models. At the same time, the discipline of mathematics is clearly more than just memorizing facts and learning efficient ways to accurately calculate operations. Our Lower School mathematicians experience also a space and time for developing habits of mind about reasoning and proof. They engage in a creative process full of successes and failures, and learn how to manage the emotions that accompany each of these times. They are challenged to communicate their thoughts aloud and on paper to share one's discoveries and to prove them logically and clearly. They solve problems carefully and critically, but also know that their way is most often *not* the only way as they work and share their solutions with their peers. They experience how math can help them learn about their own strengths and the talents of their fellow learners. They see how math can be the pure joy of cracking puzzles and playing with one's imagination, and they understand how math can be harnessed to better the world.

Look back again at Pascal's words, and this time consider how his assertion also speaks to the Quaker search for personal truth in the context of a supportive community. From this perspective, Lower School math at Brooklyn Friends is a step on the lifelong journey of creating personal understanding about the fascinating world of patterns, shapes, and numbers within a classroom of fellow mathematicians.



*Several of the scavenger hunt challenges had students relying on area maps (above) to solve problems*

## THE AMAZING RACE

by Jeffrey Stanley

**N**ine days into the school year, the 7th grade and their advisors divided into groups and went on a three-hour neighborhood scavenger hunt – a “bonding” exercise that tested their math and critical thinking skills. Organized by the always innovative Math Chair **Fanny Sosenke**, many of the scavenger hunt clues were mathematical, but there were science, writing, and history questions as well, with Head of School **Larry Weiss** serving as the “history consultant.”

The scavenger hunt was a math activity that Fanny used to do with her students when she taught in Indiana. The goal was to have kids utilize math in real-life contexts that were also fun. When she and her colleagues were looking for team-building activities for the 7th grade, she dusted off the scavenger hunt concept and made it Brooklyn-centric. “It would serve the bonding purpose, have some academics mixed in, and it wouldn’t cost the school anything,” she said candidly. Teachers Karima Hassan and Kevin Cooney took a reconnaissance trip in the neighborhood with Fanny during the week before classes started. They composed the questions together.

Some of the questions seem easy at a glance, but most required some serious thought, creativity and number crunching, not to mention a lot of frenzied traveling, all while huddled in a group on a busy street. To add to the pressure, students had a ticking clock—only two hours were allowed to complete all 16 questions.

Following is a sampling of questions.

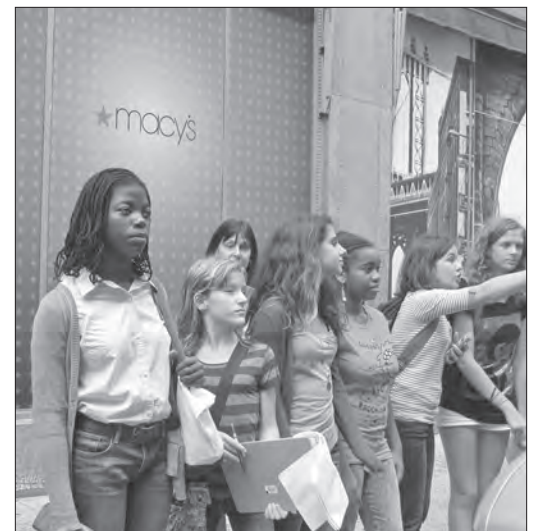
To see them all (and try your own hand at answering them), go to the BFS website, [www.brooklynfriends.org/neighborhood](http://www.brooklynfriends.org/neighborhood).

**The battle of the fast food restaurants.** This famous burger chain is not doing well. When they opened in 2002 they had an average of 145 customers a day. Unfortunately, due to new stores that open in the area, the number of customers have been decreasing by 5% each year. How many customers a day are they expecting to have today?

**Observations at the Schermerhorn Meeting House.** a) When did William Penn write *Some Fruits of Solitude*? b) Write a poem with your group that starts with the same 2 first words of William Penn’s poem. c) What is the one thing you are not allowed to do in the little yard in front of the Meeting House?

**A bike or a car?** A BFS teacher is trying to decide whether to ride a bike to school or drive a car. She can’t park her bike at BFS. She goes to Edison Park Fast and looks at the monthly rates. How much money would she save over a 10-year period if she parks her bike instead of her car at the Edison Park Fast? Remember, she is only doing this during the school year.

**Know your Brooklyn history:** a) Why are several places in our neighborhood named after Fulton? b) How many years has the Brooklyn Bridge been open? c) In Metrotech Plaza there is a large old-fashioned building with big white columns at the top of some stairs. What’s it used for now? How was it used in the past? d) Down by the river at Fulton Landing, is a rock on which a famous person, it is said, watched a famous event. Who was he and what was the event? e) On what date was the first free public school in Brooklyn opened?



*Another problem had students estimating the number of stars in a Macy's department store display window*

# ALUMNI/AE CLASS NOTES

by Susan Price '86

*BFS publishes news submitted by alumni themselves and items published elsewhere. Your news for Class Notes can be emailed directly to [sprice@brooklynfriends.org](mailto:sprice@brooklynfriends.org) or can be sent with your gift to the Brooklyn Friends Fund. We greatly enjoy printing photos of your happy occasions!*

## 1960s

Great to hear from **Gil Civildanes '67** who wrote, "...great job... the pictures posted on Facebook brought back memories of many people who I remember from the school, but also Camp Kemah, which was run by Mr. Walter Longley, who was the Physical Education teacher there at Friends School."

**Stephen Wermiel '68** will serve as chair of the American Bar Association Section of Individual Rights and Responsibilities which guides the ABA in areas such as human rights, civil liberties and social justice. Steve is the author of the acclaimed 2010 biography *Justice Brennan: Liberal Champion*.

**Mechele Plotkin Flaum '68** writes, "Just opened a new marketing consulting company called BoomerHead with partner Martin Gertler. BoomerHead helps companies get into the heads of the Baby Boomers. We presented our BoomerHeadlines keynote to the Ohio State University Business School in May and UJA Executive Counsel in June. Visit us at BoomerHead-consulting to learn about the BoomerHeading trends."

## 1970s

From **Abigail Meisel '78**: "I heard from several friends that the event for Mr. Norregaard was a big success! In addition to public relations, I'm now writing feature stories for The New York Daily News."

## 1980s

Sculptor **Adam Distenfeld '81** was featured in *The New York Times* in August in a great article, titled "With Big Heavy Rocks, a Man Turns a Nuisance Into a Niche." Adam was featured as a BFS Alum Profile in 2010. He opens his studio, Brooklyn Rockwerks to the public every June as part of Bushwick Open Studios and Adam's work is stunning. [brooklynrockwerks.com](http://brooklynrockwerks.com)

News from choreographer **Edisa Weeks '83**: her new work *Manufacturing Consent* has already been seen at the Institute of Contemporary Art's Summer Stages Dance in Boston and at the *Souls of Our Feet: People of Color Dance Festival* in Brooklyn. This festival celebrates 35 years of dance at the Thelma Hill Performing Arts Center at Brooklyn's LIU. *Manufacturing Consent* is inspired by Noam Chomsky, Yvonne Rainer and Mantovani & His Orchestra.

Artist **Beth Humphrey '84** had a solo show at the Woodstock Artists Association and Museum this July. As WAAM's Education Curator, Beth provides educational arts outreach into area schools, programming for home-schooled students, professional development for teachers and has hosted numerous family programs in the area.

**Sara Erde '88** is performing with Caramelo, an exciting flamenco-funk band in NYC. Caramelo fuses R&B, Hip-Hop, Reggae, Latin and Flamenco, and features 10

star musicians and dancers who create a vibrant theatrical experience.

**Karim Camara '88**, NYS Assemblyman, this summer began his tenure as the new Chairperson of the New York State Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus. Karim remarked "To walk in the footsteps, even in a small way of great leaders like the late Percy Sutton and Shirley Chisholm, former Mayor David Dinkins, Congressman Charlie Rangel and so many others, is truly humbling."

In June, **Dr. Darrick Hamilton '89** was the featured guest on the radio program, *Our Common Ground with Janice Graham "Speaking Truth to Power and Ourselves."* The subject was economic justice. Darrick is a professor at Milano – The New School for Management and Urban Policy. In February, Darrick testified before the Congressional Black Caucus Debt Committee and addressed persistent economic inequality linked to race – a focus of his research – and detailed the historical and sociological roots of the problem and the failure of the federal government to take decisive action.

## 1990s

Congratulations to **John Leo '92**, co-founder of Fountain Art Fair. Los Angeles welcomed its first Fountain Art Fair this fall. In six years, Fountain Art Fair has become known as the ultimate alternative art exhibition.

## 2000s

**Anand Vora '01** married Myra Makhija Vora in Miami Beach. Many congratulations and all at BFS wish much happiness to you both.

Artist **Dana James '04** recently had an amazing solo exhibition at Attic Studios Gallery in Long Island City.

Learn more about Dana's work at [danajames.info](http://danajames.info).

**Theodora Telfort '07** writes, "I'm in a two year research grant program, working with the New York Public Library's research and references team. The project is funded by the federal government with the goal of promoting digital literacy in underserved parts of the library system. Within the research team, I'm working under BTOP (Broadband Technology Opportunities Program) where I go out and teach computer literacy classes to the public."

## Faculty Alums

Congratulations to US science teacher **Hyacinth Foster**. Hyacinth's book, *Lessons from the Heart* was published this year. The book discusses twenty lessons Hyacinth learned in her journey through life and which serve as her guide, illustrated by lovely vignettes. *Lessons* is available at Barnes & Noble and Amazon, in paperback and digital editions, [hyacinthfoster.com](http://hyacinthfoster.com)

## In Memoriam

Alison Brooks '06

Alfred Everson '43

Elisabeth Gemmill Izenour '59

Regina Kelly '58

Mitsuko Takami Kurahara '39

Noel "Buzzy" Nathanson '54

Richard Soskin '40

Edith Segal, mother of Susan '59 and Paul '62

*The alumni office is honored to forward your letters to family.*

# Upcoming Alum Events

**JANUARY 5, 2012**

Thursday

11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

## Young Alums Day for the Classes of 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011

Graduates from the Classes of 2008 to 2011 are invited to join the Upper School for Lunch at 11 a.m., meet with our senior class to discuss the college process and experience, and spend the day visiting with teachers and friends.

**APRIL 27, 2012**

Friday

## Brooklyn Friends School Spring Gala

Hosted by the BFS PAT, the annual Gala and its silent auction raise funds for financial aid and special campaigns at BFS.

**JUNE 2, 2012**

Saturday

1 p.m. to 7 p.m.

## Alumni Reunion Day

Basketball, Campus Tours, Meeting for Worship, and our first-ever Reunion Cocktail Party. This year, BFS is saying goodbye to two wonderful women who have been with BFS for many years, and they have great retirement plans: Norma Gordon, Teacher of Spanish at BFS, and Jennifer Knies, Director of Admissions and



Norma Gordon,



Jennifer Knies

former LS teacher will both retire in June. In addition to celebrating reunions, we look forward to having you congratulate and toast Norma and Jennifer with us.

## BFS ARCHIVES AND ATHLETICS NEED YOUR MEMORIES

BFS is reconstructing its history of athletics championships and we need alumni to help. The BFS Archives does not have a complete record of all athletics highlights and championships in the school's history prior to 1995, nor does the Athletics Department. Banners are a recent invention and The Life did not cover everything that happened at BFS. We have had many great teams throughout the years, and we want to remember all of them, but we now need alumni to move this important project forward. Please contact Susan Price '86, [sprice@brooklynfriends.org](mailto:sprice@brooklynfriends.org), with your BFS athletics memories.

## Please give to the Brooklyn Friends Fund.

Donations are tax-deductible and are easy to make on our secure online server: <https://brooklynfriends.org/donate>.

Connect with Brooklyn Friends School on the Internet

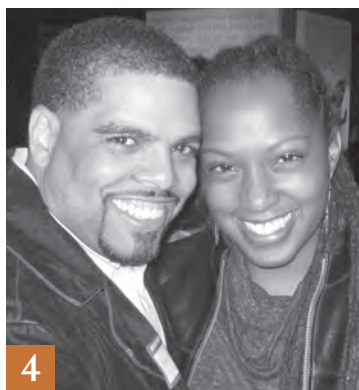
facebook

LinkedIn

[brooklynfriends.org](http://brooklynfriends.org)

# Alums at The Cellar

More than 30 BFS friends attended Friends at 5:30 at The Cellar at Beecher's Handmade Cheese. "It's about what a good time we're having now because of BFS!" was one alumna's reflection on this annual event. Thanks for a fabulous night, friends!



1. Class of '03: Mathew Kennedy, Amanda Welch, Darnell Paul, Danielle Garson, and Edmund Francis; 2. Olu Gittens '91, Mie Kurahara '72, Jennie Price '90; 3. Larry Weiss, Beth Burns Punzi '82 and David Schoen '81; 4. Darrick Hamilton '89 and Ziedah Ferguson



Edson Elcock '03, BFS assistant soccer coach (left) and professional soccer player with the Richmond Kickers (photo courtesy of Richmond Times Dispatch)

## Alumnae/i Profile

# Edson Elcock '03

by Jeffrey Stanley

**E**dson Elcock '03 arrived in Brooklyn from Trinidad as an athletic youngster fixed on a single goal: to play professional soccer. He credits friends and faculty from BFS with inspiring him to hang onto his dream and follow it through.

"It was tough because all I knew was soccer, and I came to the US and it's not the number one sport," recalled Edson. "Everyone's playing basketball and baseball, so I had to adapt." The Trinidad native can make light of such childhood struggles to fit in now, but the peer pressure didn't stop the energetic nine-year-old from dreaming of his first love. His passion paid off: today Edson is a USL pro soccer player.

Edson started out at a public school in Crown Heights, Brooklyn in 3rd grade, where he still lives today. He soon excelled in other sports, especially basketball, but soccer always beckoned. "Funnily enough I made a couple of friends after a year, maybe in 4th grade, whose families were also from the Caribbean." Through them he joined a local soccer league and even encouraged some of his Brooklyn-born friends who'd never played soccer before to join the team with him.

The kids league eventually led him to BFS. "I knew Jamal Ballantyne '98 through that same local team," he said. "They were called the Soccer Kids." Jamal was already a BFS student, and boasted to Edson about BFS' then-

**It was a new start again. It was like when I first came to the States. It was a big change. The first day I had a guide, one of the students. He was the best guy. He showed me around, introduced me to everyone. Within a week I was fine.**

coach Richard Van Buren. Richard and the Head of School met with Edson and his family and encouraged him to apply to BFS. He began the next school year, entering as an 8th grader.

"It was a new start again," said Edson. "It was like when I first came to the States. It was a big change. The first day I had a guide, one of the students." Fatefully, that fellow Middle School student was Alap Vora '03. "He was the best guy. He showed me around, introduced me to everyone. Within a week I was fine. Everyone was really nice, really genuine." By their senior year the two would go down in BFS history as being part of the basketball dream team that won the 2003 state championship for the first time in BFS history. That legendary game is still fondly discussed in the BFS community and was even the subject of a documentary, *Blue Pride!*, produced by Athletic Director David Gardella. "To this day Alap is one of my very, very closest friends," said Edson.

Edson credits David, then-Upper School Dean, Day Rosenberg, and Upper School teacher Vlad Malukoff for inspiring him to pursue a career in soccer. "All of those guys, they contributed to my growing up," he said. "Day Rosenberg was so into soccer. I still email him once in awhile. Vladimir is such a strong-minded person. David is a sports fanatic. Just seeing how involved he is in athletics is incredible to watch."

With David's encouragement, Edson is working as an assistant basketball and soccer coach at BFS in his off season. He plans to continue coaching as a second career when he retires from soccer. "It's good to be around David and copy his ideas," Edson quipped.

After BFS, Edson attended Wingate University in North Carolina and played Division II soccer for a year before transferring to Old Dominion University his sophomore year. After graduation he was drafted by a Major League Soccer team, the Kansas City Wizards. "I spent an entire season there, and then in '08 I spent an entire season with the Puerto Rico Islanders, a United Soccer League team." Today he plays for the USL's Richmond Kickers in Virginia, where he won a championship his first season.

How does he feel today, knowing he achieved the rare success of fulfilling a childhood dream? "I don't like to say it, I don't like to use it, but I guess that is my title – I am a professional soccer player."

Edson's wheels are always turning, just like they were when he was nine. "Europe is always a dream, but I'm happy where I am. Very happy."

His advice to the current generation of BFS students strikes a note of faith. "Always believe. That's something I learned growing up at BFS from my friends and some of the faculty. No matter what anyone else says, be it good or bad, always believe."

# NEW FACULTY 2011-2012



*Christina Clemente  
Admissions Associate*



*Melissa Coad  
Assistant Librarian*



*Trevor Corson  
Upper School History  
& World Languages*



*Alexandra Feris  
Lower School  
Spanish*



*Camille Fobbs  
Preschool Associate  
Teacher*



*Cassie Foote  
Family Center  
Associate Teacher*



*Anabel Goa  
Lower School  
Associate Teacher*



*Lisa Goldenberg  
Assistant Counselor*



*John Hay  
Middle School  
Mathematics*



*Elizabeth Heck  
Upper School English*



*Kamauru Johnson  
Middle & Upper School  
Learning Specialist*



*Lorna Jordan  
Middle & Upper  
School Theater*



*Elizabeth Kennedy  
Kindergarten Head  
Teacher*



*Aziz Khan  
Middle & Upper  
School Math & Science*



*Katie LaMonte  
Family Center  
Associate Teacher*



*Stephanie Lorence  
Fourth Grade  
Associate Teacher*



*Jazelyn Montanez  
Preschool Associate  
Teacher*



*Chantel Morris  
Second Grade  
Associate Teacher*



*Laura Obuobi  
Preschool Associate  
Teacher*



*Denise Parks  
Fourth Grade  
Associate Teacher*



*Elyes Perez  
Family Center  
Associate Teacher*



*Melissa Poitevien  
Family Center  
Associate Teacher*



*Matthew Presto  
Third Grade  
Associate Teacher*



*Deborah Richman  
Family Center  
Head Teacher*



*Tiffany Robertson  
Kindergarten  
Associate Teacher*



*Valerie Ross  
Family Center  
Administrative  
Assistant*



*Ryan Thornton  
First Grade Associate  
Teacher*



*Angelika Trojanowski  
Middle & Upper  
School Physical  
Education*



*Cristina Valenti  
Preschool Associate  
Teacher*



*Annie Yu  
School Nurse (After-  
school & Summer)*

## Announcements & ACHIEVEMENTS

■ BFS senior **Erin Carden** received a summer scholarship from the Alliance Summer Arts Program, or ASAP Award.

She became eligible for this coveted prize by earning a Gold Key in the 2011 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, a nationwide competition. Along with winning the Scholastic Award came the invitation to be considered for the highly selective ASAP Award. She applied, and out of over 30,000 Gold Key winners was one of only 80 to receive it. The award enabled her to attend the Turnstyle Program on full scholarship at Chester College in New Hampshire.

Turnstyle is a 3-credit writing program and normally costs nearly \$2,000 in tuition. "It was intensive but it was enjoyable throughout," said Erin. "I took classes in the morning from nine to 11. From one to four in the afternoon we met with guest authors who wrote fiction, nonfiction, even surrealism. Each of them talked to us



about their own writing and led us in writing exercises." Her busy day didn't end there. After dinner every night, classes resumed from 6 to 8 pm.

"It was fantastic," she said, "the energy from being around the other writers. I definitely knew that I loved writing but I kept learning so much about so many different styles."

Erin is settling on the colleges to which she'll be applying later this year but she "definitely" intends to keep writing.

# SUMMERTIME SPURS PROFESSIONAL GROWTH FOR BFS FACULTY

by Jeffrey Stanley

Every summer a handful of BFS faculty receive curriculum development grants from the school based on proposals they submit earlier in the year. These funds are meant to spur BFS teachers to explore new curricular ideas not just for their own classes but often for their entire divisions. The intended key beneficiaries of these grants are not just the faculty of course, but the students.

This past summer, Second Grade Teacher **Margaret Trissel** received a grant to begin creating a K-4 Quakerism curriculum for the Lower School. Her work focused on exploring similar lower school curricula at other Friends schools across the country, and studying Friends Council on Education resources. Her goal wasn't so much to create a rigorous rubric but to find engaging ways "to

invite the children into silence" while also teaching Quaker beliefs and values in age-appropriate ways including through the use of books and songs.

Also in the Lower School, Science Specialist **Megan Gottlieb** worked to integrate the school's Woolly Pocket garden project into the science curriculum to enhance students' hands-on experiences. What, you may ask, is a Woolly Pocket garden? They're the feltlike bags hanging across the fence on the roof of 375 Pearl Street. The pockets are made from recycled materials and are meant to help urban schools create and manage a surprisingly large-scale nursery. The thriving fruit, vegetable and herb garden was created last spring.

Technology Integrator **Cordenia Paige**, received a grant to attend a Spanish immersion program in Playa Jaco, Costa

Rica that was paired with digital photography courses. The courses were held at the School of the World, a popular institution offering "learning vacations" to international travelers. Cordenia's twofold goals were to write a photography guide for faculty, and to find ways to integrate the Spanish language into the school's technology curriculum.

Math Chair **Fanny Sosenke** and Math teacher **John Hay** spent the summer creating a series of "math challenge packets" for every math unit in the curriculum for grades 5 through 8. Fanny's frequent math challenges—think of them as extra credit brain teasers—have proven popular with students and have been a successful tool for engaging them in math beyond classroom requirements. These new challenge packets are an extension of that activity.

**Jesse Klausz**, who teaches Middle and Upper School History, was selected to participate in the National Endowment for the Humanities seminar *The Sock Hop and the Loft: Jazz, Motown and the Transformation of American Culture from 1959-1975*. This intensive three-and-a-half week course was held at Washington University in St. Louis with 25 history, English and music teachers from across the country participating.

"The seminar used both jazz and Motown as a lens through which to look at America in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, and paid particular attention to race in those decades," explained Jesse. "We studied individual musicians, genres, watched films, and read criticism from a variety of sources, comparing different perspectives on the music and thinking about what



Ticia Vreeland (left) and Janet Villas on a boat near the Tappan Zee Bridge



Jesse Klaus at Washington University in St. Louis

those perspectives meant about our country at the time – and what issues have continued to this day."

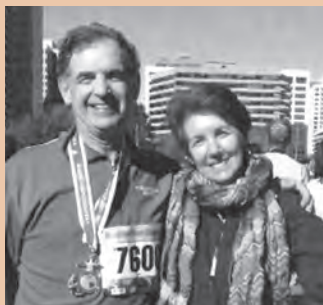
Jesse plans to incorporate his seminar notes into a new course he will be teaching this spring on the Korean and Vietnam wars. What's the connection between Motown, jazz and Asia? "I researched the Cold War, and in particular how the United States used jazz to project an image of freedom to the rest of the world," said Jesse. His presentation was among the handful chosen to be published on Washington University's website this year.

Middle and Upper School science teacher **Janet Villas** and Middle School Humanities teacher **Ticia Vreeland** were also accepted into a highly competitive NEH program. The week-long course, "Ask Me About the Hudson," was held in July on the campus of Ramapo College in New Jersey, and focused on the art, literature and history of the 19th century Hudson River region.

The week included lectures, field trips, writing workshops, art exhibits and, of course, boat trips up and down the storied river including a tour through the swampy Meadowlands. Janet and Ticia's end result was a new set of lesson plans for science and humanities students.

## In for the Long Haul

Several faculty members were on the run this fall! Head of School **Larry Weiss** completed his 11th Marine Corps Marathon; **Jeffrey Cox**, Middle and Upper School Counselor, ran in the Richmond, Virginia, Marathon, and history teacher **Ed Herzman** finished 12th out of 382 runners in Fall Foliage Half Marathon in Rhinebeck, NY. Kindergarten teacher **Elizabeth Kennedy** completed her 11th Marathon in the ING



Larry Weiss, celebrating at the end of the marathon with his sister, Susan Weiss, Executive Editor of USA Today.

NYC Marathon on Nov. 6, and **Elizabeth Jonckheer**, preschool associate, ran in the NYC Marathon to benefit Alzheimer's disease research. Also running for a good cause were BFS alums **Nathan Weiser '05**, who ran the Marine Corps Marathon, fundraising for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, and **Chad Levy '03** who ran the NYC Marathon, also for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

# BASKING IN THE GLOW OF A MEMORABLE SEASON

The stellar BFS fall athletics season will be remembered as one of the best fall seasons in years. Among the highlights, the Girls Varsity Volleyball team won the ISAL League and Playoff Championship. Girls Varsity Soccer finished with its first ever winning season. Middle School Girls Volleyball also had an exceptionally strong season, including winning the Poly Prep Tournament. The Middle School soccer team, composed of almost 30 players, completed one of its best seasons ever, finishing with an impressive 11-5 record.

With eight new players and four veterans, the Girls Junior Varsity Volleyball team had a winning season. And the Middle School Boys Cross Country team concluded their fall with a first place finish in the ISAL Championship race.

The Girls Varsity Volleyball season included the 100th recorded win (over the past seven years) for longtime coach



*The Varsity Volleyball team and managers celebrate a victorious season*

**Felix Alberto.** “Any number of victories or losses are shared by the team and my assistants,” the characteristically humble coach said. “I’m sure the program hit 200 awhile ago because our teams have averaged at least 15 victories per season since 1997 when I first joined the program.

“For me what matters is passing on the knowledge I

have about the game and having the girls compete to the best of their abilities,” he said. “I also enjoy seeing some alums come back to help us coach, or coach someplace else.”

There is indeed something special about the team’s strength and its solid record since Felix began coaching here, especially given that there are no tryouts. “BFS volleyball is special,” he explained. “We don’t recruit players. We teach whoever wants to learn and challenge herself and to play volleyball.” And under coach Felix’s tutelage they continue to soar.

Volleyball isn’t the only arena where our Upper School girls are on a steady upward curve. Last year, under the tutelage of the school’s new soccer coach **Gary Lawson** the team made incredible strides after years in the doldrums. Gary made bold predictions then about what would be in store for the team with his guidance, and

that seems to have been borne out this season—their first ever winning season.

“Last year I concluded the season by reviewing what we had done well and not so well, and identified areas for improvement,” said Gary. “One of the first steps was to improve the confidence of the players. To develop or improve confidence is to accept your strengths, and be willing to attribute success to yourself.” He continued, “There is a tendency for female athletes to defer their success to someone else, or to the team, and then take responsibility for the loss or failure themselves.” He’s on a mission to counteract that self-defeating attitude.

The team was founded years ago, then folded, but brought back seven years ago. During its first five years prior to Gary’s arrival the team lost 75% of its games. “That’s a huge confidence deficit,” he said.

“Too many times as coaches

*continued on next page*



*Middle school cross country coaches and athletes celebrate their win in the ACIS championship. From left, Coach Ray Brown, Philip Camposano, Miles Nabritt, Emmitt Sklar, Kamal Goulbourne, and Assistant Coach Will Watkins '05*



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### Basking in the Glow of a Memorable Season

*continued from previous page*  
we develop technique 90% of the time and mental attributes only 10%. But it's the 10% that controls the 90%." As part of his goal to reverse that trend, Gary set specific goals for the whole team. This season they identified the need to improve shot accuracy. Gary played back video of their games so the whole team could analyze it together and suggest ways to improve. It worked. "Last year our shot accuracy was at 58% on target. By focusing on this specific and measurable goal, the players improved by 10%, and shot 68% on target." Miraculously they went on to score 42 goals in 14 games.

Despite his super-confident attitude last year about the 2011 season, did Gary ever have any moments of doubt this fall in which he thought he might have spoken too soon? "No moments of doubt or darkest moments," he insisted. "We had a very difficult start to the season because our first two games were against the PSAA Champions



*BFS's Aoife Henchy '15 and another friend playing an intense game of soccer this fall*

and Playoff Semi-Finalists. In fact, we were 1-4 after the first five games. But we played well, and our performances were getting better." Getting better? The team only lost two of the next nine games – a tremendous improvement.

### MORE HIGHLIGHTS

■ Led by captains Madeleyn Valenzuela '12 and Victoria Lagano '12, and from the sidelines by injured teammate Zoe Babian '12, the Girls Varsity Soccer team finished 7-6-1 and averaged three goals per game. Madeleyn led the scoring with 14 goals in 13 games, and leads as BFS' all-time top scorer with 32 goals in her four year varsity career.

■ Dante Pilkington '12 placed first and Giovanna Molina '15 placed 9th in the ACIS Cross Country Championship.

■ The Middle School Soccer team had five consecutive victories when the season began and concluded with a second place league finish. Charlie Hills, Halima Matthews, Max Neuman, Isaac Handy, Sammy Horowitz, and Mali Axinn earned coach's honors for their exemplary play and sportsmanship.

■ Eighteen players strong, the Middle School Volleyball team won thirteen straight matches and the Poly Prep Middle School Invitational Tournament. Taty Rosenthal, Maya Walfall and Carolyn Campos proved to be excellent teams leaders, Nell Pearson and Abby Moore were most improved players, and four athletes: Grace Morenko, Anna Franceschelli, Ashley Azeez, and Tyler Roberts, were recognized with Spirit and Panther Paw awards.

– Jeffrey Stanley

## LONGTIME COACHES HONORED

**F**our outstanding teachers and coaches were honored by the school this fall in recognition of their longtime service to the school, our students, and the athletic program. Combined, these four individuals given 75 years of service to the school as an athletic coach. They have mentored numerous assistant coaches, have inspired hundreds of students, and have been positive role models for fitness and athleticism to their teaching colleagues.

**Marna Herrity** has completed 24 years as a BFS coach; **Janet Villas**, 19; **David Gardella**, 17; and **Felix Alberto**, 15. While each has coached more than one sport, they are best known for their "signature" sports: Marna, volleyball; Janet, softball; David, basketball, and Felix, volleyball. The coaches were presented with awards "in recognition of inspiring leadership and years of dedicated service" at the fall sports collections, and a new plaque recognizing their accomplishments is now in the lower gym. Blue Pride!