



August 21, 2009

Dear Heathwood Hall Parents and Community,

Welcome to Friday afternoon! I speak on behalf of the entire faculty and staff when I say that we have had a fantastic first three days with your children at The Hall, and I hope that all the smiles I see around campus are a good indication that your children feel the same way. There is a great deal of positive energy and momentum right now at our school, and I'd like to highlight some of the reasons for it here in anticipation of more thorough communication on the particulars throughout the year. What follows is, by no means, an exhaustive list.

With a few exceptions, we have installed and are using SMART Boards in most of our learning spaces. With the installation of 25 this summer, we now have a total of 58 SMART Boards on campus. In addition, we have considerably upgraded our internet backbone campus-wide and purchased multiple sets of "netbook" classroom sets (with more to come!). I received an email yesterday from Katherine Robinson '91, our 5th grade math teacher, entitled "Meet Jane Jetson," and here is what she wrote: "I don't know when I have had as much fun teaching as I did today. My fifth graders used the new (netbooks) to set up an account with the new Pearson/Envision website so that they can access their textbook/workbook online as well as access some other very cool stuff. The comments ranged from 'I feel like I am in a whole different school!' to 'I feel like I am on another planet!' With my amplification system and SMART Board, I was a maniac . . . about how cool it was that we could do all of this . . . It really was the classroom of the future in action."

The ECLC is back under one roof again and, with some plant improvements to compliment a lot of the work our faculty has undertaken over the last year, it is one shiny happy place! Our Lower School not only has a new math program, but has rewritten their curriculum maps for better integration of science and social studies, as well as hired staff to study the "accelerated" learner at Heathwood Hall. Our Intermediate/Middle School staff has made a number of concrete changes toward best middle years practices, with an advisory period and retooled study skills preparation standing out most readily. As always, our Upper School continues to build upon its program in many ways. In particular, the science department has busied itself in programmatic improvement and expansion over the last few years, as evidenced by the beta testing of interactive netbooks in our science classrooms, the addition of AP Environmental Science, and future not-ready-for-primetime enhancements. Our arts program continues to thrive, as best exemplified by our IMS/US chorus teacher Janis Corley walking up to a few of us at the beginning of the week, putting her hands on her hips, and with a near-cocky smirk telling us that she had 103 students out for US chorus (she had four come out for chorus in 2005). Our athletes who have worked all summer long are now getting into their competitive seasons, so there is a wonderful sense of hope and expectation in our gyms and on the fields. Last, we continue to fundraise for our new Dining Commons but, in anticipation that we can reach our fundraising needs in the near future, the Board has already hired an architect to design the building and has undertaken the permitting process. While we aren't making any promises, it is reasonable to think that we might have a new place to eat and gather sometime during the 2010-2011 year!

The most comprehensive opportunity we have for growth this year as a school and as a community is a strengthening of our mission statement. One thing that became readily apparent to me through the search process, discussions with every type of constituent within our community, and observations both critical and casual was that we have a hard time talking about ourselves (an excellent quality in the sense of humility, but not for clarity or building spirit). One way to bring positive change in this regard is to come back to our mission statement. This summer I spent a little time every day shaping a statement that most accurately reflected the qualities I knew Heathwood Hall Episcopal School both to possess and through which to grow. I presented a version of the statement to various members of the community as the summer wore on, then gave it to the entire faculty for review last week, tweaking it all along the way. We will shape it to whatever degree necessary this fall, then make a recommendation to the Board. Meanwhile, the Strategic Development Committee of the Board will also spend some time with the statement this fall, with hopes that their insight is reconciled with that of the faculty. If so, it is my expectation that we can ratify a new statement in time for 2010. Once approved, you can expect to see our mission statement in spirit, practice, and word throughout Heathwood Hall Episcopal School.

So, as of today, here is our working draft of the new mission statement: **“We walk with each student as he or she learns to balance the rigor of our college-preparatory program, the breadth of substantive co-curriculars, the blessings entrusted to each by our campus home, the pursuit of mastery, and the call to honor God in his or her daily life and work. Within our Episcopal identity, we focus most acutely on the principles of Stewardship, Inclusivity, and Respect for the dignity of every human being as potential ways to best achieve this balance.”** Please feel free to comment as you see fit!

Moving on to more immediate community-building, we have many opportunities to gather and celebrate during the next week. I want to make sure you have marked your calendars for the following:

- Our Varsity Football Jamboree is here tonight at 7:30 p.m. Our Highlanders will play in the first and third quarters.
- Our Back-to-School Supper will be held before our first regular season football game next Friday, August 28, at 6:30 in our Athletic Center. To make your dinner reservations and payment, go to www.heathwood.org and click on “News and Events.” This is a wonderful family event, and we strongly encourage you to join us!
- Your Volunteer Registration Form to Get Connected is due August 28. You will find more information on Get Connected, including many volunteer opportunities and the sign-up form, under “Contents” on Edline.
- Our Highlander Club and Jr. Highlander Club are seeking members. The Frankstone family generously is hosting a Highlander Club drop-in tomorrow evening, August 22, at 6:30 p.m. The event is open to all Heathwood Hall families.
- Last, my pet project, the Parent Business Directory - Please add your business information so that other Heathwood Hall parents can support your business. The link is: : <http://www.heathwood.org/pbdform.html>.

I will close by thanking all of you for entrusting your children to us. In addition, I want to thank our faculty and staff for working so diligently to ready themselves and the school for the exciting year

ahead and most especially our maintenance staff for braving the summer heat to do so much in so little time. Here's to a great year for our children!

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles H. Jones III". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping underline.

Charles H. Jones III
Head of School