Fifty & Fabulous

A LOOK BACK AT GAYNOR HISTORY | REMEMBERING JACKIE LONG
SCHOOL LEGACY - FAMILY TRADE | EXPANDED MIDDLE SCHOOL
WINTER 2013 | 50TH ANNIVERSARY

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FROM THE HEAD OF THE SCHOOL

I’M SO HAPPY TO BELIEVE THAT we are embarking on our 50th year at the Stephen Gaynor School. I hope you will enjoy reading this edition of the Gaynor Gazette, which showcases the school, the faculty, and the students, as well as celebrating the achievements of our students and alumni.

In addition, we are grateful for all the assistance you’ve been so kind to provide. You’ve been a source of support and encouragement, and we look forward to continuing our work together.

I’m pleased to honor Gaynor co-founders Dr. Miriam Michael and Yvette Siegel-Herzog. Their vision for this school has transcended time. It’s hard to believe that a school opening its doors to just five students would have grown to nearly 300 students.

As we celebrate this milestone, I want to express my deepest gratitude to all of you who have been a part of the Gaynor family. Thank you for your continued support and for helping to make this school what it is today.

Sincerely,

Dr. Scott Gaynor Head of School
Gaynor Remembers Jackie Long:
A Tribute to our Friend and Colleague

Our beloved Jackie, adored mother, grandmother and friend, passed away on December 4th.

Jackie is survived by daughter Wendy, son-in-law Billy and granddaughters Noelle and Violet. Her friends mourn her passing and will never forget her.

Jackie has been an instrumental part of the Stephen Gaynor School for more than 25 years, where she worked passionately as Director of Admissions. Jackie loved children, big blue and ballet.

“Beloved Jackie, you will forever be in every corner of our school,” expressed Yvette Siegel-Herzog, Gaynor co-founder.

A celebration of her life, the way Jackie would want it, was held Friday, December 14th at Stephen Gaynor School.

At Jackie’s request, all donations should be made to the Stephen Gaynor School Scholarship Fund.

Looking Back at 50 Years of Outstanding Education

When do you decide that a vision is worth pursuing?
What kinds of people have the guts to start a school when society cannot understand the very children the school is for?

These questions come to mind when one thinks about the incredible challenge Dr. Miriam Michael and Yvette Siegel-Herzog faced when they decided to start a school for bright children with learning differences 50 years ago. But they are not questions that concern the Stephen Gaynor School co-founders; rather, they are questions that incited them to act.

We were really explorers,” exclaims Siegel-Herzog, who met her co-founder and dear friend in graduate school at New York University. “Not many schools existed for this group of children with developmental language delays, like dyslexia. There wasn’t even a field of teaching special education,” adds Siegel-Herzog. “What’s more, mostly boys were diagnosed at the time because girls were generally quieter and often fell between the cracks.

To prepare for the opening of the school, Dr. Michael put an advertisement in The New York Times seeking potential students. They hired a principal, Mr. Brooks, positioned themselves to teach, and opened the doors of a two-room apartment to a handful of students. In the beginning, it was difficult for the two to determine the best way to proceed. “The first few days, we just kept making coffeet,” explains Dr. Michael. “We weren’t sure what to do next so we would continuously fill the coffee pot. We were figuring it out as we went along,” she adds.

But success was quick to come. To the co-founders’ delight, just one year after Stephen Gaynor School opened its doors, word spread about their unique teaching methods. Shortly afterward, the parents’ buzz began swarming, “my child has made progress and even likes school.” And that’s all the next parent had to hear. These parents knew their children learned differently, but didn’t know how to help them. “They found a home in our vision,” Siegel-Herzog says. Before the pioneers knew it, they had outgrown the apartment that served as their school house and decided to take a huge risk in buying the brownstone on West 74th Street, which housed the Stephen Gaynor School for more than 40 years.

“We considered living in the building, but we filled the classes so quickly that we didn’t have to,” Dr. Michael recalls.

As Gaynor grew and began hiring more teachers, Siegel-Herzog became a master at diagnosing children, “I am enchanted by children,” she shares. The co-founders were focused on identifying the children who would benefit most from the school’s approach to education. They wanted to make a difference in each student’s life.

Over the years, the pair has been continuously surprised at the degree to which children with learning differences respond to being taught the right way. The transformation from a non-reader to a reader or a student with low self-esteem to someone who is “really on fire about learning to learn” is absolutely dramatic. The school continues to be set apart by the quality of education it provides, the special virtues of the Stephen Gaynor School family, the mission that we live by, and the dedication of our hard-working staff.

As the co-founders look toward the next chapter for Stephen Gaynor School, Siegel-Herzog notes, “I pray that someday, this type of education will be available to every child.”
THE GAYNORS OPEN UP ABOUT THEIR FAMILY TRADE

The diversity grew with the leadership of the next generation. Scott, who left a successful career in banking to join the school, started as the Director of Operations in 1994, taking over some of his grandfather's responsibilities. "All of a sudden I realized, banking is not for me. I want to make a difference in this world," reveals Scott. Feeling passionate about the mission of the school, he decided to attend Columbia University, Teachers College, where he secured a Masters of Arts in Private School Leadership and a Doctor of Education in Organization and Leadership.

"If Scott would continue to run the school for the next 50 years, it would make me so happy."
- DR. MIRIAM MICHAEL

Under Scott's guidance, the school began to expand and soon realized the need for a larger facility, hence the West 20th Street location. "The opportunity I saw was not to change the school but to highlight what was so terrific about it to a larger audience," Scott explains. In reflecting on this significant moment in the school's history, his father adds, "It is one thing to build a building but another to fill it. When Scott came on board, he and Yvette had a symbiosis together. Their relationship made things happen." Scott was thrilled to help the co-founders take their vision to the next level, providing the space needed to reach more students. But the West 20th Street building had housed the school for 50 years, its walls steeped with commemorations. "When we left West 20th Street, I was the last one out of the building," Scott begins. "I wrote on the wall in black magic marker, 'Thanks for the memories!'"

Scott's mother, Jo Ann Gaynor, who has served on the Board of Trustees for many years, was instrumental in helping with the construction and decor of the school's new home. With the additional space, the school had an opportunity to provide a richer arts program. Thus, Jo Ann and Gordon's oldest son, Adam, joined the family trade as a Photography Teacher, reaching out three generations of Gaynor involvement.

"Through 50 years of Gaynor school history, there's much to admire," Scott and Gordon agree that the co-founders' mission is at the core of the school's success. "They're committed to serving students with learning differences and they've kept true to that mission for 50 years," Scott says proudly. "It was their mission on day one and it has now become the culture of the school."

Preserving the school's culture is critical to its co-founders, but with Scott at the helm, there seems to be little to worry about. "If Scott would continue to run the school for the next 50 years, it would make me so happy," says Dr. Michael with a smile. And that is the crux of the Gaynor Legacy.
Gaynor Expanded Middle School Opens to Fanfare

What a way to start the school year! On August 30th, Gaynor Middle School students had much to be excited about as the doors to their new school building opened. The highly anticipated expansion of the school campus to the old Claremont Stables and Carriage House on West 89th Street more than doubles the 35,000 square feet the school occupies on West 90th Street, allowing it to serve more children.

The new high-tech facility – which was designed specifically for Middle School students – includes a multi-media arts room with a kiln, a digital photography studio, and a larger cafeteria with tables that are small and easy to move, allowing students flexibility to socialize in groups or spend time alone.

“We were operating a Middle School in a space that was designed for younger students,” says Middle School Co-Director, Alison Giovanni.

The opening marks the Stephen Gaynor School’s 50th Anniversary and completes the second phase of the expansion project. One year ago, the school opened a new Early Childhood Center in the building, focused on educating children ages three to six. The school is also working to develop the top two floors of the building to include a new science lab, research and writing center (modern day library), a rooftop field house, and a theater in the basement that will be able to seat nearly 300 people. With support from our parents, alumni, friends and community, we’ve raised nearly nine million dollars to date – bringing us closer to our goal.

“The need for a science lab is tremendous!” explained Co-Director, John Belich. “Our students have great aptitude and interest in science, but haven’t had access to equipment that can accentuate their natural abilities. The new lab will benefit them immensely.”

Now that students have settled into the new space, they are beaming with pride. Riley Lemaire, an 11-year-old Middle School student, said having the new space changed everything. “Coming to school felt like a new experience. Everything here is different from the Lower School building – it’s made just for us!” She also appreciates how nice and well-thought out the new facility is. “I was looking at other schools for my sister and some of the ones we went to felt like they weren’t as nice as this one. I love the new building,” she added.

Even alumni are excited to see how the space has developed, especially those who graduated last year. Giovanni observes, “They walk around in awe!”
These days, people change jobs as frequently as they change cell phone contracts—but not at Stephen Gaynor School. Many of the Gaynor staff have been with the school for 15 years or more. Their loyalty is obvious, their gratitude is palpable, their pride is incredible—and they bleed Gaynor Green. We sat down with some of them (totaling 55+ years of experience) to explore their tenure and find out why we’re still together after all these years.

Yoseffa Kizelnik
SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST—15 YEARS (HAS RETIRED)

“Yoseffa Kizelnik came to Gaynor as a Speech-Language Pathologist shortly after she graduated from school, 40 years ago. "When I first started, we had 40 students and now we have almost 200, but the school still has that family feeling," she explains. "We have always emphasized individuality—working with each student to help them in a way that is best for them. This philosophy has been consistent at Gaynor—no matter how many students we have."

Like many of her colleagues, Kizelnik returns to the school year after year, because she loves the students and the staff. She says she’s constantly learning from the people around her, because each child is unique and has different approaches and ideas to the classroom. “I love watching the confidence of our students grow. They become more open to learning and to taking risks in their learning,” she says.

In fact, Kizelnik admires the faculty who come from Gaynor—many of them have moved on. “When the graduates come back to us, it’s always great to see how they’ve developed,” she says. “I see many of them in the halls of the school.”

Chris Meyer
HEAD TEACHER: 19 YEARS

For Chris Meyer, Stephen Gaynor School is home. She began her teaching career at the school in a Student Teacher role 15 years ago, and has progressed to Assistant Teacher, Head Teacher, Reading Specialist—and currently, Chair of the Preschool Department. She is well known and respected at Gaynor School, she says.

“She is a kind person who is always infections and encourages students to learn,” says her student. “She is always positive and helps me learn. She is my teacher.”

Mindy Stern
COORDINATOR OF THE LOWER SCHOOL—10 YEARS

“Gaynor means a brand new start for so many students,” says Mindy Stern, who has been with the school for 10 years. Stern, who is currently the Co-Director of the Lower School, coordinates the Lower School activities and helps students in need. "I value the longer school day for our students. It helps them become more independent and responsible." Stern says that the students are happy and that the school has a strong academic focus. She also mentions that the school has a strong sports program and that the students love participating in it.

Sloan Shapiro
RESEARCH DEPARTMENT CHAIR—16 YEARS

For Sloan Shapiro, Stephen Gaynor School is home. She began her teaching career at the school in a Student Teacher role 16 years ago, and has progressed to Assistant Teacher, Head Teacher, Reading Specialist—and currently, Chair of the Preschool Department. She is well known and respected at Gaynor School, she says.

“She is a kind person who is always infections and encourages students to learn,” says her student. “She is always positive and helps me learn. She is my teacher.”

Debra Adams
SPED AND LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST—10 YEARS

As a Sped and Language Pathologist at Gaynor for nearly 10 years, Debra Adams has had the opportunity to work with countless students. "My favorite part of the job is helping students develop their communication skills," she says. Adams says that the school has a strong focus on helping students develop their social skills and that the staff is always supportive of each other.

Ellen Simon
READING SPECIALIST—19 YEARS

Ellen Simon has been encouraging creativity through her classes for 19 years. Her students love her class and are often seen engaging in creative activities. Simon loves to see her students flourish and is always looking for new ways to engage them in the classroom.

Ruth Rachlin
ART TEACHER—20 YEARS

Ruth Rachlin has been teaching at Gaynor for 20 years. She has taught a wide range of students and has helped them develop their creativity and artistic expression. Rachlin says that she loves seeing her students grow and is always looking for new ways to engage them in the classroom.

Joe Kaufman
MATHEMATICS SPECIALIST—15 YEARS

Joe Kaufman is a Mathematics Specialist at Gaynor School. He has been teaching there for 15 years and has taught a wide range of students. Kaufman says that he loves seeing his students grow and learn, and that he is always looking for new ways to engage them in the classroom.

These are just a few of the many stories of dedication and commitment that make up the Gaynor School community. Each student, teacher, and staff member plays a unique role in creating a supportive and nurturing environment for all.

These stories demonstrate the importance of dedication and hard work in achieving success. They also show the power of teamwork and collaboration in creating a positive learning environment. Finally, they highlight the importance of valuing and supporting each other in our individual journeys of growth and development.

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Turning Ideas into Beautifully-Crafted Written Work:

From Learning to Read, to Reading to Learn:

Our Writing Program is Based on Judith Hochman's Work and Includes a Sequence of:

- Learning the difference between fragments and full sentences
- Defining specific parts of sentences (phrases, clauses)
- Identifying types of sentences (declarative, question)
- Paragraphs: Students learn how to write each element of a paragraph
- Quick Outlines: All students brainstorm ideas before writing, developing the topic and conclusion sentences, then make notes in the middle

That will become supporting sentences in paragraphs.

Multi-Paragraph Outlines: Middle School students use a more in-depth outline method that includes a thesis statement and an introduction and conclusion paragraph to develop essays, research reports, Science and Social Studies papers.

Creative Writing: This is incorporated throughout the writing program. It particularly coincides with other subject areas (e.g., writing lengthy of books in Reading Groups, or journals in Social Studies).

EDITING: Students rewrite and edit to produce a final copy. Each student can be proud of learning in another subject area – like Social Studies. It makes writing more purposeful and we’ve found that benefits our students.

Though teachers are constantly assessing students’ writing, there are three formal writing assessments during the school year. The entire school writes on the same topic during assessments so that faculty can see progression year after year, helping better determine each student’s strengths and weaknesses.

“Periodically, we pause to determine students’ needs and strengths, so that we can help them be successful at each stage,” says Head Teacher, Osti Spinelli.

That looks different for each child – some are working on oral language or pictorial, while others are developing outlines.

Though we often don’t think about it, writing requires many skills - having the language and vocabulary to express an idea, developing fine motor skills to manipulate materials to write, and building the endurance to physically write. At Gaynor, we tailor our program to meet each student’s needs every step of the way.

Most schools have a pre-determined program that students go through. But at Gaynor, students aren’t pigeonholed into formalized tracks. Instead, they’re given the freedom to grow into their interests and develop their unique talents.

At Gaynor, reading programs include a focus on:

- Decoding/Spelling: based on phonics sequence, providing consistency and repetition
- Students read every day, starting with individual sounds, building to blending sounds, then to whole words and sentences. They aren’t given anything to decode that they haven’t already learned.
- Students learn to spell the sounds they’re working on while continuously reviewing previously learned phonetic elements.

Comprehension: Questions/Answer Relationship
- Strategy to help students determine how/where to find the answer. At the youngest stages, we break questions into two categories: “In the book” or “In my head.” As they get older, these categories are further broken down. For example, “Why do you think he is sad?” would be broken down to “Why do you think” and “he is sad.”

Reading Specialist, Ellen Simon, says, “The beauty of our program is that we are able to cater to the student as an individual. Not only is the book chosen specifically for each group, but the level of instruction is geared especially for those children. You may have two groups using the same book, but exploring it at different levels.”

A key benefit of Gaynor Reading Groups is that books are not chosen in advance, rather, they are based on each group’s needs. Similarly, there is not a “set number” of books that have to be read each year. This allows groups to take the time working on comprehension skills, making reading much more enjoyable for our students.

Reading Specialists work collaboratively with teachers participating in classroom reading lessons. Chair of the Reading Department, Sloan Shapiro, explains, “This allows us to tailor remediation for students to ensure it’s more meaningful and focused solely on each student’s need.”

Homework is structured to help faculty track what students understand and where they are having trouble. Shapiro explains, “Looking at the homework each morning helps us gauge students’ progress and pace lessons accordingly. We won’t introduce anything new until we know students are ready for it.”
What was 1962 like?

Average cost of a new car: $3,125.00
Eggs per dozen: 32 cents
Gas per gallon: 28 cents
Popular movies:
West Side Story, Spartacus, Lawrence of Arabia, To Kill a Mockingbird

Popular musicians:
The Beatles, Bob Dylan, Chubby Checker, Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons, Ray Charles

John E. Kennedy was President
John H. Glenn, Jr., became first American to orbit the earth during Friendship 7 orbit

Oral Polio Vaccine developed by Albert Sabin and given to millions of children to combat Polio
Release of first Beatles recording the single “Love Me Do”
Andy Warhol’s famous painting of a can of soup debuted
90% of US households owned a TV
The first Wal-Mart and K-Mart stores opened

At Gaynor, we can’t think of a better way to celebrate 50 years of transformative education than to honor the two people who were responsible for making it happen. This year’s 50th Anniversary Gaynor Gala will pay tribute to Dr. Marian Michael and Yvette Siegel-Herzog—two women who were extraordinarily ahead of their time when they took a risk in opening the Stephen Gaynor School to provide an unparalleled education for students with learning differences.

Fifty years after its inception, the Stephen Gaynor School has touched the lives of more than 2,500 children—creating confident, independent learners prepared for success in the classroom and beyond. “Every day is a voyage of adventure,” exclaims Siegel-Herzog. “When I walk in the door each morning, I think—what children will do something today that they couldn’t do yesterday?”

In honor of the school’s 50th Anniversary, we will be unveiling the “spice Key Award” for those who have been instrumental in helping make our school what it is today. The award represents a key to the school as a symbol of gratitude. Gaynor is proud to announce that recipients of this one-time award will be Dr. Gordon Gaynor, Carol Feldberg, Ermina Rivera and Daryl Simon.

Funds raised through the 50th Anniversary Gaynor Gala will go towards the ongoing transformation of the historic Claremont Studios into a state-of-the-art facility for our students. Huge progress has been made in developing the building, but there’s more work to be done.

“When we started the school, we were feeling our way, but we never had any idea it would be what it is today,” says Michael. The co-founders want the school to continue to be innovative, which is why the new South Building has been designed with a look towards the future. When the expansion is completed, the school will be able to provide a facility that’s as forward-thinking as its co-founders were when they opened the school half a century ago.

“When I walk in the door each morning, I think—what children will do something today that they couldn’t do yesterday?”

Yvette Siegel-Herzog
A LOOK BACK AT GAYNOR HISTORY

1962:

Gaynor hires the first Director of Admissions, LILLI FREEDMAN, who stays with the school for 43 years.

Co-founders move the school to a much larger building -- a brownstone on West 70th Street -- where it remained for nearly 40 years.

1964:

DR. SCOTT GAYNOR, Dr. Michael's grandson, leaves his job in business to become the Head of School. He helps set the school on a course of unprecedented growth and development, while maintaining its familial atmosphere and individualized approach.

Gaynor is accredited by the New York State Association of Independent Schools (NYSAS).

1969:

Gaynor moves into a brand new 50,000 square-foot facility on West 60th Street, where it remains today.

The school launches the Community Learning Center to provide special education support to public school students in the community.

1994:

Honors IRWIN D. SIMON at the annual Gala hosted by Rep. PHIL HUAR.

Board of Directors approves the purchase of an adjoining building on West 86th Street, which adds 50,000 square feet to the school – providing countless opportunities for students.

2004:

Honors JUDY MCGRATH at the second Gaynor Gala, hosted by Jon Stewart.

Honors AL RYAN as recipient of the Stephen Gaynor School Founders’ Award at the first annual Gaynor Gala.

2006:

Honors RUTH WANG at the annual Gala hosted by Kelly Ripa.

Honors RUTH RAMONA BERNESTEIN at the annual Gala hosted by Al Roker.

2007:

Honors JORDAN KOTH, RICHIE JACKSON, and BO WONG at the annual Gala hosted by Bernadette Peters.

The Early Childhood Center opens in the fall, allowing children ages three to six to learn in a nurturing environment.

2008:

Middle School students begin the school year in their brand new facility on West 86th Street designed to prepare them for high school and beyond.

2009:

Honors SCOTT MAGER at the annual Gala hosted by Kelly Ripa & Mark Consuelos.

2010:

Honored by the National Center for Learning Disabilities with Pete & Carrie Reade Award for work in addressing the social and emotional needs of our students, while maintaining the highest standards of education.

2011:

Honors ROBIN DOMENICOS at the annual Gala hosted by Kelly Ripa & Mark Consuelos.
Ms. Rachlin’s Classes
Display Creativity:
Gaynor Art Update

Ms. Rachlin’s older fine arts group took recycling to another level! The students used discarded wood pieces as a basis for their project. They started by painting them with primary colors, then they arranged the pieces to form an abstract design, creating low relief sculptures.

Ms. Rachlin said the result was remarkable and interesting sculptures! In the fall, the older fine arts group was presented with a challenge: make the ordinary extraordinary. And they did. With plain, white umbrellas as their canvases, they designed and painted umbrellas—designs ranging from abstract to concrete. This incredible artwork is currently displayed hanging upside down from the ceiling in the South Building. As they sway back and forth catching the light, the image is lovely.

Mr. Gaynor’s Students
Explore the World through the Camera:
Photography Update

Abstract photography can produce very dramatic images. It relies more on our primal sense of form, color, and curves than it does on detail. Mr. Gaynor’s older fine arts class investigated the techniques and subject matter of abstract photography as well as some of the greatest abstract photographers of our time from Eugene Atget and Edward Weston to Ansel Adams and Clio Korku.

This fall, students in Mr. Gaynor’s class also examined variations of light and shadow to create a nature still life using leaves. Students took photographs in the nearby park for this project, inspired by noted photographer Irving Penn.
Encouraging Expression Through Drama

BY KRISTEN PLYLAR-MOORE

Students in the Lower School have spent the last few months working on various ensemble building activities, movement exercises, and pantomiming. Recently, students were paired with a partner and given a short scene to pantomime for the class. One of the goals for the students is to learn how to most effectively communicate their characters’ activities to the audience. Their next task will be to create an original scene to pantomime with their partner.

Students in the classes of Mr. Bookin, Ms. Borders, Ms. Hurlbert, and Ms. Schostak became playwrights during this fine arts cycle. The students were given a picture of a table with a couple of old soda bottles. From there, they brainstormed possible settings, characters, conflicts, and resolutions. Students made choices based on these lists and began writing their plays. At the end of the cycle, each student performed his or her play with a partner at a staged reading.

Students in the classes of Mr. Meyer, Ms. Dorbad, Ms. Graber, Ms. Rebisco, and Ms. Kaufman studied Arthur Miller’s The Crucible, a fictional account of the Salem Witch Trials. In addition, the students learned about the actual events surrounding the trials and the historical context in which the play itself was written. After preparing scenes and monologues from the play, students performed them at the end of the fine arts cycle.

Expanded Drama Program Enhances Lower School Curriculum

This is an exciting time for the Gaynor Drama program! For the past several years, Drama has been offered to Middle School students only. But with the program’s enormous success, the school decided to extend it to our younger students.

Last year, Ms. Kristen implemented a pilot Drama program designed to support the Social Studies curriculum of two Lower School classes, in which the students wrote and performed original plays based on the experiences of immigrants and Native Americans. Through this process, students gained a greater insight into the lives of the people they studied, while also learning the fundamentals of acting, playwriting, and vocal strength.

This school year, the Drama program has been extended to include most of the Lower School classes. By incorporating theater into their education, Gaynor students develop a greater empathy for the experiences of others, while gaining the skills needed to express their own vision and ideas with confidence.

From “Do Re Mi” to Garage Band: Gaynor Students Know Their Music

BY CHANTEL MEAD

Students in the Lower School began the year by learning and reviewing Solfege singing. Different classes had various activities including learning how to sing “Do Re Mi” from The Sound of Music with hand signs, translating the Solfege scale onto instruments, and creating their own melodies. The whole unit culminated in a stunning Melody Tree that hung on the wall outside of the Music Room! Students in the classes of Mr. Bookin, Ms. Borders, Ms. Hurlbert, and Ms. Schostak took advantage of our new set of Orff instruments or learning the music software program Garage Band. Some classes chose the Orff instruments and also learned multi-layered group pieces. Other classes chose Garage Band and learned the basics skills necessary to create their own music from scratch!
GAYNOR GATORS: A MILESTONE SOCCER SEASON

Goalkeeper, offensive penalty, advantage: these soccer terms have become part of the vernacular of twice as many Gaynor students as last year. That’s because the Gaynor Gators Soccer Team now has so many players we’ve had to create two full teams representing school colors, the Green Squad and the White Squad.

As if doubling the amount of players is not enough, this season we reached a milestone—being asked to play as part of the American International Private School League (AIPS). The Green Squad, led by captains Callum Gordon and Stephanie Brown, finished the season in sixth place overall with a 2–4–1 record. The White Squad, led by captains Quinn Lansilii, Hailey Smilow, and Oscar Saraf, played a very tough non-league schedule and finished with a record of 2–3.

“Both teams played every minute with a passion and level of commitment unlike any other in our school’s history,” commented Coach James Melillo. “I was proud to see returning veterans and new team members come together each and every game, putting their best effort forward.”

If you missed out on the games this year, fear not! The team will resume weekly practices in the spring to continue their development and help prepare for next fall. We hope to see you there!
The United States government is a representative democracy. Checks and balances work to ensure that representation is fair and that key decisions are made for the benefit of the country. The separation of powers is a key principle in this form of government. Branches of government are responsible for creating and passing laws, implementing policies, and overseeing budgets. The judicial branch interprets laws, ensuring they are applied fairly and consistently. The branches are balanced to prevent any one from gaining too much power. The President, as the leader of the executive branch, works with Congress to ensure the government functions effectively. The Constitution outlines these roles and responsibilities, ensuring a system of checks and balances that keeps the government accountable and responsive to the people.
FALL EVENTS

ECC PICNIC
Families of our youngest students came together in September to celebrate the start of school at the ECC Family Picnic. The event, hosted by the Parents Association, took place in Riverside Park.

APPLE PICKING
The entire school enjoyed our annual Apple Picking Day this fall! Students hand-picked apples, enjoyed hay rides, visited the Orchard Store, and feasted on a picnic with their classmates. Some classes even made delicious muffins and pies with the apples they picked. Yum!

DENIM DAY/BAKE SALE
In support of Lee National Denim Day, our teachers donated $1 and sold baked goods to benefit Breast Cancer Awareness and Research.

GREEN AND WHITE DAY
Students showed their school pride on Green and White Day. The day began with a Pep Rally, complete with a visit from the Gaynor Gator!

HALLOWEEN AT GAYNOR
Even though Hurricane Sandy forced us to close school for several days, many students took a break on Halloween to enjoy some Gaynor Fun!

COMMUNITY SERVICE
HURRICANE SANDY
RELIEF EFFORT: Gaynor students rallied together in November to help those affected by Hurricane Sandy. In partnership with AmeriCares, we collected hygiene kits for dissemination to the hardest hit areas in NY, NJ, and CT.

TULIP PLANTING: In November, students participated in the Annual Community Tulip Planting Festival by planting tulips in the West Side Community Garden as part of a community service project. Not only did we plant tulips to help celebrate our 50th Anniversary, but we also jump started the weekend of 10,000 tulips.

THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE: The entire school joined together to bring in canned food for St. Gregory’s Church. Students put together more than 100 bags of food to be distributed to those in need. Thanks to all who participated.

BIG APPLE CIRCUS
In November, Gaynor enjoyed a fun outing to see the Big Apple Circus at Lincoln Center! Students and faculty alike were amazed by the unbelievable acrobats, incredible bike tricks and comical clowns. It was an entertainment event for all ages!
FALL EVENTS

AN ECC THANKSGIVING!
The day before Thanksgiving, Early Childhood Center students celebrated in the ECC Thanksgiving Assembly with performances for one another. These included:

WILLOW ROOM (Ms. Jurow and Ms. Hemlich) sang two songs that embody the sentiment of the holiday — “It’s November” and “Let’s be Thankful.”

HUDSON ROOM (Ms. Yezzi and Ms. Brehall) performed "Albuquerque Turkey," a song about a family that has pizza for Thanksgiving because they have a turkey for a pet.

CASCO ROOM (Ms. Galin and Ms. Kay) sang "They Were the Pilgrims" about the first Thanksgiving. Gobble Gobble!

CLC SHOOTING FOR SUCCESS BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

The annual Community Learning Center’s Shooting for Success basketball tournament was held on Saturday, December 8. Faculty, parents, alumni and friends came together to compete in this year’s tournament to benefit Caynon’s Community Learning Center, a free, after-school reading program for children in our community. We’re pleased to report that there were more teams registered for this year’s tournament than ever before!

The tournament came down to the last game, where Ms. Roberta Hirsch’s From J Portland team matched up against Dr. Caynon’s long-standing The Dads’ team. It was a tough match-up, but From J Portland took the prize this year — winning the trophy from last year’s champions.

This year’s event raised around $5,000 — making it one of the CLC Shooting for Success’s highest fundraising events. Thanks to everyone who helped make it a success!

In honor of Jackie Long, who loved sports, we are pleased to announce that we will be renaming our annual Shooting for Success Basketball Tournament the Jackie Long Memorial Tournament. It’s a great way for the school to honor her memory.

Stay tuned for more details on our next fundraising event in the spring, Spinning for Success.
GAYNOR WINTER CONCERTS

This year marks the first time we split our Lower School Winter Concert into two performances, due to our growing student body. We were rewarded with double the pleasure because our students know how to perform!

In the first concert, "Celebrating 50 Years of Gaynor History Through Music," students from the classes of Ms. Arbesfeld, Geller, Mason, Passaretti, Bemel, Brandels, Klausner, and Sandler performed musical numbers from the past 50 years with skits and costumes highlighting pop-culture and significant moments in Gaynor history. All of our performers were dressed to the nines in outfits ranging from hippies and disco dancers to punk rockers and glamour stars.

Together, the two concerts helped us celebrate the past 50 years with gusto, and an exciting look forward to the next 50! Thanks to Ms. Chantel, Ms. Amelia, and Ms. Kristen for putting together these amazing shows!
50 REASONS WE LOVE GAYNOR!!!

By Class 403

We individually made lists of why we LOVE Stephen Gaynor School, since it is Gaynor’s 50th Anniversary! As a class, we combined the reasons and made 50:

- We love our buddy class and all of the people who always help us learn.
- We loved planting tulips in the garden and coming to school during Hurricane Sandy, even though other schools were closed.
- Gaynor is special to us because of science, literacy, reading, language, math, art, OT, physical education, music, drama, and library. Social studies is fun, especially Native American studies.
- We love learning how to type during computer and practicing our skills.
- Going to the park after a long day of working hard is also why we love Gaynor.
- We love voting and especially our class’s fake presidential election.
- The Winter Concert is always so much fun.
- We have fun during picture day, snack time, lunch, recess, and field trips.
- We love Pizza Friday and having cupcakes at the bake sales.
- We loved apple picking and to the circus.
- We loved school nights!
- We love our read alouds, morning meetings, and warming tickets.
- We love Stephen Gaynor School because we always have fun, like during Thanksgiving and collecting Titans for people who needed them after Hurricane Sandy.
- Gaynor means so much to us because of all the help we get from our OTs, language teachers, and reading and math teachers!
- Our tailgate and sports night are 80 exciting, too! We love Green and White Day and owning the Gator Gator!
- God bless us all, we love all of our Gaynor friends and teachers!

FROM STUDENT TO TEACHER - ALUMNUS PROFILE:

EMILIE NASSER

Emilie Nassar graduated from Stephen Gaynor School in fall 2009 but every time she walks into the school, she says, “I feel like I’m home.” The school provided a comfortable environment where she could safely build relationships that she says will last a lifetime.

After graduating from Gaynor, Nassar attended a mainstream High School and went on to graduate from the University of Miami in 2012. She’s currently working towards a Master’s degree at Bank Street in Early Childhood Special Education, and is doing her student-teaching in Ms. Juris’s class at Gaynor! “When I realized how much I could accomplish with the help I received at Gaynor, I knew I wanted to be able to give back,” she explains.

Nassar says her desire to become a Special Education teacher began at Gaynor. She feels like her future students will benefit from having a teacher who understands first-hand what it’s like to have a learning difference. “I hope to be a role model for kids. I want them to see that if you work hard and believe in yourself, you will accomplish your goals.”

While at Gaynor, Nassar says her teachers took the time to prepare reading lessons she’d be interested in and help foster relationships to boost her self-confidence. She says her time at Gaynor made a huge impact on her life, summing it up by saying, “Without Gaynor, I definitely would not be where I am today. Thank you Gaynor!”

In January, the entire school community celebrated our 50th Anniversary at the Gaynor Annual Ice Skating Party at Bryant Park. Families enjoyed skating with the Gaynor Gator and enjoyed pizza, hot chocolate, and cookies. Everyone had a blast!
TO PARENTS OF ALUMNAE/I:

If this issue is addressed to your child who no longer maintains a permanent address at your home, please notify the Development Office at 212.787.7070 ext. 1125 or alumni@stephengaynor.org with the correct mailing address. Thank you.