



ANNUAL REPORT
2010-2011

Ethical Culture Fieldston School

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Japan's Recovery Effort*

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COVER PHOTO: STAN SCHNIER



PUTTING OUR MISSION TO WORK



A YEAR AGO AT THIS TIME, we wrote to you that we were immersed in the search for our next head of school. We are delighted that our new head of school, Damian J. Fernandez, joined us in July for what we hope and expect will be a long tenure at ECF. Although he has just recently arrived on campus, Damian worked throughout the spring with us, the transition committee, and our interim head, Joyce Evans to ensure a smooth transfer of leadership. To this end, the board and Damian participated in a retreat at which we explored shared goals, hopes, and dreams for the institution. It has been a great pleasure getting to know him better, and we are all tremendously excited about his future at ECF.

We are proud that the search for Damian was inclusive and exhaustive and reflected the best of what this institution embodies. Several hundred members of our community took part in a search process that we affectionately named “Survivor: The ECF Head of School Search Edition.” It turned out to be a reality show with a terrific ending, and we are excited to work with Damian to uphold the mission of the school and to help build on its relevance and vitality for future generations.

It was also a busy and productive year for the board, and there is much to report. The board’s enrollment and financial aid committee, working with the finance committee, made important strides in moving us toward an inclusive tuition that contains some of the larger “hidden costs” of an ECF education. At the lower schools, tuition is now fully inclusive, covering trips and supplies, while in the middle and upper schools, financial aid students now receive support in purchasing books and supplies. This was an important first step and one we hope to build upon in the coming years. We are also proud of the work of the buildings and grounds committee, which undertook a detailed study of the future needs of our facilities on both campuses to help us plan for the future upkeep and protection of these valuable resources.

The buildings and grounds committee also partnered with the environmental task force to make the mission of environmental sustainability a more integral part of our overall facilities planning in the coming years.

The board diversity committee spent the year reviewing the institution’s work around multiculturalism and inclusion in an effort to provide Damian with an overview of where we are at this juncture in this important aspect of our school’s mission. The development committee, working closely with the office of institutional advancement and alumni, has led some exciting initiatives in the last year. The annual benefit was a tremendous success, the most successful ever in attendance and money raised. We are especially proud of the increase in parental and alumni participation in annual giving (reaching 76 percent for parents, 20 percent for alumni, respectively), without which the school could not thrive.

The recommitment to mission that we discussed in some detail in last year’s annual report has continued in earnest. We are particularly excited about the development of initiatives in progressive education, such as the new interdisciplinary program, City Semester: The Bronx Experience, available to students in Forms V and VI. This semester-long program, which integrates history, English, science, ethics, language, civic leadership, and the arts around the study of New York City and, in particular, the Bronx, is an outstanding example of ECF’s mission statement at work. The program offers an exciting intersection of hands-on learning, community service, and multicultural education. The board tremendously enjoyed a presentation by the faculty leaders of that program last spring, which left many of us wishing we could take the course ourselves!

We have many people to thank for the wonderful work of the last year. First, our tremendous gratitude goes to Joyce Evans, our interim head



NYC! Ethical Culture's fourth graders sang about the many attractions of the city in their production of Annie.

of school who, as we write, is enjoying a much-deserved break with her husband, John, at their cottage in Wales. Joyce came to us at a time of transition and uncertainty. She dove into the work of the school, never shied away from hard issues or long hours, and all the while modeled honesty and integrity in her leadership of the school.

We are thankful, too, to our outstanding administrators, who worked on overdrive during a year of transition to keep the school running smoothly and effectively, supporting Joyce, our faculty, staff, students and families while also assisting in our search for a new head. We are also grateful to the entire ECF staff, and especially the head of school assistant Janet Gardiner, who sup-

ports our work day in and day out. We are very appreciative of our faculty, who give so much of themselves to make this school the great institution that it is. And finally, we are indebted to our fellow trustees, who worked tirelessly on behalf of ECF this past year. To the wide ECF community, we offer our deepest thanks for your massive contribution of time, energy, ideas, and treasure. We feel honored to have partnered with you in the important work of ensuring the strength and health of ECF this past year.

Laura Jacobs Blankfein '71
Tracy Chutorian Semler '82

Co-Chairs, ECF Board of Trustees

FROM STRENGTH TO GREATER STRENGTH



IT HAS BEEN MY HONOR to serve as interim head of school, and as I reflect on the past year, I see that it has been one of building upon the strengths and mission of ECF.

The board of trustees took seriously the assistance of the P&T in helping us determine hidden costs for families throughout the school as they experience an ECF education. This year's tuition has become all-inclusive at the two lower schools, meaning that expenses for overnight trips, plays, and special events are covered in the tuition. For the first time this year, books and trips have been added to the financial aid packages in the middle and upper schools. The board is committed to continuing to look at ways of making the often "hidden" extra costs less of a burden for all our families.

Our admissions department is to be commended. Our applicant numbers continue to soar which is a testament to our strong and compelling mission and our educational program. Families are drawn to the unique blend we offer through our mission: academic excellence, ethical learning, progressive education, and diversity. Sadly, it means that we are unable to accept all the qualified candidates who apply, and the admissions team is left to make painful decisions among qualified students for whom we simply do not have enough room.

As a school dedicated to inclusivity, we have made good progress in our critical work in the area of diversity. In each division, under the leadership of the principals and the diversity coordinators, through our curriculum, extracurricular activities,

Founders Day, May 2011



and support for students and families, students are taught to respect and value diversity. At ECF we define diversity broadly as including race, socio-economics, family composition, learning styles, gender, and sexual identity. Ethical values are encouraged through understanding, knowledge, and compassion toward the multicultural world in which we live.

Although these have been transitional years, ECF continues to hire well, and our future is full of exciting potential. Our new head of school, Damian Fernandez, is poised to lead us with reflection and vigor. He is determined to build upon our compelling mission, upon the strength of our distinguished past and the rich promise of our future. Kevin Jacobson, our new middle school principal, comes to us with a depth of experience in progressive education and a solid knowledge of middle school students. Kate Reynolds, a longtime Fieldston faculty member and parent, has joined the administrative team as interim dean of faculty and chair of our NYSAIS self-study, which will be completed this year. Although we had few faculty openings this year, the new teachers whom we have hired bring solid experience, new ideas, and a passion for helping us experience our evolving mission, and the academic excellence we expect.

As I end my two years among you, I leave knowing that this strong institution is in good hands with new leadership, a dedicated and effective board of trustees led by co-chairs Laura Jacobs Blankfein '71 and Tracy Chutorian Semler '82, an administrative council of experienced and talented leaders, a distinguished and talented faculty and staff, as well as parent leadership who will build on past strengths toward even greater strengths in the future. I will be supporting you from afar, often singing your praises for all that has been accomplished and for the exciting times of growth that lie ahead. Thank you for the honor of serving you and for the trust you placed in me.

Joyce Gregory Evans
Interim Head of School
2010–2011

A Message from Damian Fernandez, Head of School

I am honored and humbled to begin my work as ECF's head of school this year. My family and I are delighted to be part of this community, and we look to the future with excitement.

For me, schools are communities of memory, hope, and caring; our shared hopes for the future should be nurtured by ECF's proud history and our constant caring for this community and what it represents. At ECF, our point of departure must be our mission – ensuring excellence in what Felix Adler called “the best and most thorough education.” It is imperative that our mission – which embraces ethical learning, academic excellence, progressive education, and multiculturalism – resonates for our times.

This year offers a wonderful opportunity to examine foundational questions and aspirations, as we will launch our self-study process. The self-study, required for accreditation by the New York State Association of Independent Schools (NYSAIS) every 10 years, will serve as the basis for collective learning about our school – where we excel and where we must improve. It will provide the platform for our work on a strategic plan in 2012-13.

In this context, the board and I have selected four primary areas of focus to inform our work during the coming months: communication and connection; academic excellence; leadership; and financial sustainability. We have identified both long-term and short-term goals in each. Focusing on the four priorities will help us all to stay the course as we advance critical goals this year.

We have an ambitious agenda ahead of us, and I look forward to listening and learning from all of you – faculty, parents, students, staff, administrators, and alumni – and to serving ECF for many years to come.



BUILDING ON OUR MOMENTUM: THE FINANCIAL UPDATE

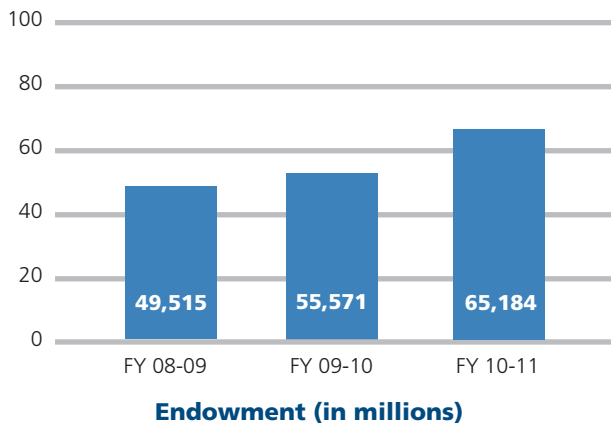
THE YEAR 2010–2011 was a year of momentum and accomplishment in many ways. As the financial markets showed signs of stability and recovery from the economic downturn in 2008-09, we were able to continue to move forward with our financial commitments, continuing to better and advance the school’s mission and priorities. We continue to be watchful, diligent, and conservative in our financial management.

The school produced a balanced budget for the 2010-11 fiscal year, sustained by unwavering support from the community for the annual fund. Auxiliary program revenue also increased due to growth in summer camps and other weekly programs. The prevailing low interest rate credit environment was very advantageous to the school, allowing us to reduce our outstanding debt substantially by lowering our annual debt service payment. We remain committed to managing our expense base. However, continued increases in national healthcare costs make this a significant challenge.

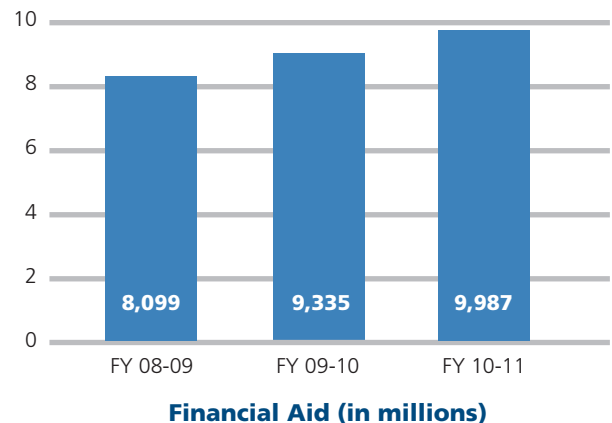
The school made progress in managing its building assets and carbon footprint. This year, we completed a deferred-maintenance assessment, evaluating our building infrastructure on both the Ethical Culture and Fieldston campuses. We continued to invest in capital improvements, such as classroom renovations at Ethical Culture and improvements at Fieldston. We also completed the first-ever carbon footprint measurement, and we are on track to meet our 2012 commitment to the Green Schools Alliance as a result of our decision to lock in a two-year fixed price contract for green power. We are dedicated to enhancing the safety and energy efficiency of our school.

None of our financial and operational accomplishments would have been possible without the continued support and commitment from the audit, buildings & grounds, environmental, finance, and investment committees of the board, led by Nino Magliocco, John Beres ’81, Jon May ’84, Robert A. Pruzan ’81, Paul Schnell, and John Feingold ’74, respectively.

Through prudent management of our endowment by our finance and investment committees, the endowment continued to build on its performance from prior years.

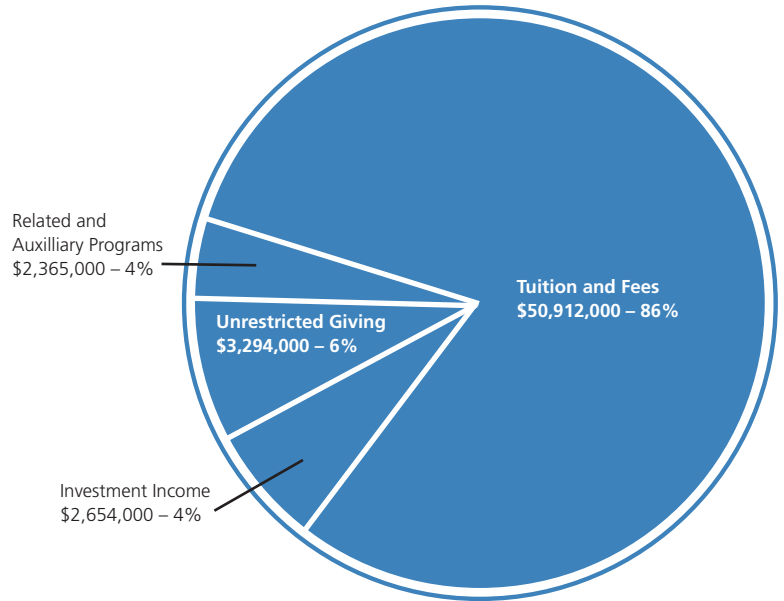


The robust financial aid budget reflects our deep commitment to socioeconomic diversity, made possible by our generous donors along with our finance, institutional advancement, and enrollment and financial aid committees.

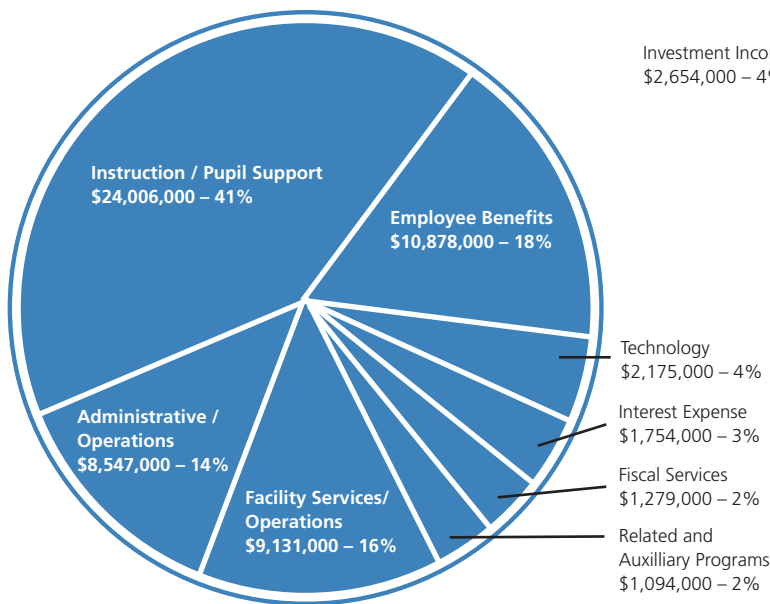


Highlights:

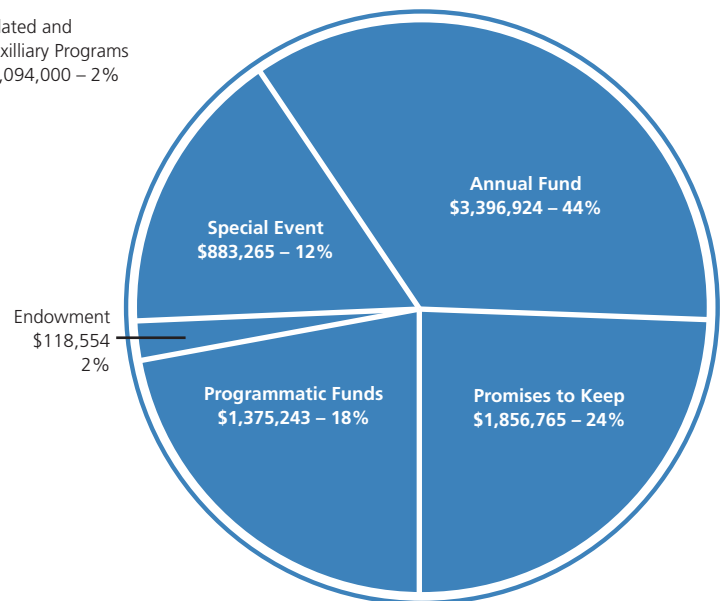
- Lowered our interest expenses by reducing the outstanding debt balance.
- Increased auxiliary program revenue due to growth of summer camps and weekly programs.
- Continued to employ technology to increase administrative efficiency, reduce waste and cost.
- Significantly increased annual fund participation and achievement.



Total Operating Revenue \$59,225,000



Total Operating Expenses \$58,864,000



Total Giving \$7,630,751

Note: The numbers in the total operating revenue and expense charts do not include restricted funds; the numbers in the total giving chart do include restricted funds and pledges.

COLLEGE CHOICES – CLASS OF 2011

At ECF, looking for the appropriate college is treated as a continuation of a student's education; each is encouraged to be self-reliant and thoughtful, making choices that are individually suitable and challenging.

The caliber of this senior class is clearly reflected in the broad range of excellent schools they have chosen. The students of the class of 2011 have matriculated at the following colleges:



STAN SCHNIER

Nine students to:

Oberlin College

Eight students to:

Northwestern University

Seven students to:

Brown University

Six students to:

Wesleyan University

Five students to:

College of Wooster
Yale University

Four students to:

New York University
University of Chicago
University of Pennsylvania

Three students to:

Davidson College
Duke University
Franklin & Marshall College
Georgetown University
Hamilton College
Haverford College
Northeastern University
University of Vermont
University of Wisconsin
University of Southern California
Washington University

Two students to:

Amherst College
Bates College
Carnegie Mellon University
Colgate University
Colorado College
Columbia University
Dartmouth College
Harvard University

Kenyon College
Occidental College
Skidmore College
Smith College
Tulane University
Vanderbilt University
Vassar College

One student each to:

Bard College
Boston College
Brandeis University
Bryn Mawr College
Bucknell University
Carleton College
Case Western Reserve University
Clark University
Cornell University
Earlham College
Emory University
Hampshire College
Howard University
Indiana University
Johns Hopkins University

Macalester College
Maryland Institute College of Art
Pitzer College
Princeton University
Reed College
Rice University
Stanford University
Stony Brook (SUNY)
Swarthmore College
Trinity University, Texas
United States Naval Academy
University of Arizona, Tucson
University of Colorado, Boulder
University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana
University of St. Andrews
University of Texas, Austin
Wake Forest University
Wellesley College
Williams College



VOLUNTEER WITH US!

PARENTS

Parent Annual Fund Volunteer Effort (PAVE)

Help us increase parent participation in the 2011-2012 ECF annual fund. As a PAVE volunteer, you will reach out to fellow parents to encourage participation in the annual fund. Last year's PAVE volunteers helped us increase parent participation by 3%. With your help, we can achieve even more this year! For more information, please contact Kate Pfeffer, director of annual giving, at (212) 712-6244 or kpfeffer@ecfs.org.

Annual Fund Benefit

Want to make March 10, 2012 a night to remember? Volunteer to help plan this year's benefit! Volunteers are still needed. Please contact Courtney Archer-Buckmire, assistant director of annual giving, at (212) 712-6245 or carcher-buckmire@ecfs.org.

Form VI Gift Committee

Have a student graduating from Fieldston this year? We hope you will join our Form VI Gift committee to help leave a legacy for your child's class. For more information, please contact Sarah Danzig Simon '96, director of alumni giving, at (212) 712-6277 or ssimon@ecfs.org.

ALUMNI

The Alumni Volunteer Network needs your time and talent. Please consider joining us in one of the following volunteer roles:

- Class Recorders
- Class Agents
- Alumni Benefit Committee
- Reunion Committee (this year, classes ending in 2s and 7s will be celebrating their reunion)

To get involved, please contact Sarah Danzig Simon '96, director of alumni giving, at (212) 712-6277 or ssimon@ecfs.org.

Fieldston Upper students in Settlement: The West Bronx Story took a canoe trek on the Bronx River last year. Those who enroll in City Semester: The Bronx Experience, a new interdisciplinary program to be offered in spring 2012, will engage in similar field projects throughout the borough and beyond.



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Parents of alumni: If your children are no longer living with you, please notify the alumni office of their correct addresses. Thank you.

In April, Ethical Culture students created 3,500 paper cranes to trigger funding for reconstruction efforts following the earthquake in Japan.

