

Search Process Begins for New Head of School

The search process for ECF's new head of school is now officially underway. Laura Jacobs Blankfein '71 and Tracy Chutorian Semler '82, co-chairs of the board of trustees, recently announced the composition of the search committee and its chair, Paul Schnell '72, parent of a recent Fieldston graduate and an Ethical Culture 5th grader. In keeping with independent school best practices, the committee will consist entirely of trustees. The committee brings multiple perspectives from the ECF community and in an effort to bring many new voices into the process, 10 out of 15 members of the new search committee did not serve on the last head of school search; the only "repeats" are members of the executive committee of the board.

After interviewing several leading search firms, the executive committee of the board of trustees selected Carney Sandoe to assist in the search for the next head of school. Aggie Underwood, vice president and managing associate of the firm, will co-lead the search with her colleague, Earl Ball. Underwood and Ball have considerable combined experience in progressive

school searches and their own professional experiences as heads of school prior to becoming search consultants. They bring a rich understanding of progressive pedagogy and practice, how schools like ours operate and thrive, and what the role of head of school entails.

The new search committee members will speak with and learn from their colleagues on the last search, drawing on the tremendous knowledge they gained in their recent experience. It is comprised of John Beres '81 (parent), Laura Jacobs Blankfein '71 (parent, vice chair, co-chair board of trustees), Kathryn Chenault (parent), Tracy Chutorian Semler '82 (parent, vice chair, co-chair board of trustees), Lesley Field (parent), James Gara '72 (former board chair and parent of graduates), Nino Magliocco (parent), Paul Mason (parent), Andra Miller (New York Society for Ethical Culture, executive committee), Michael Nott (parent), Robert Pruzan '81 (parent), Lief Rosenblatt (parent of a graduate), Jeremy Rosenholtz (faculty representative), and Mel Wymore (parent, P&T representative).

The next step in the search process is to appoint the support committees from around the ECF community (faculty

and staff groups, administrators, parents, alumni, and students) who will help inform the process and bring important voices to the search. The search consultants began their work with an initial three-day visit to ECF in March, where they met with administrators, faculty, staff, students, and parents. In addition, in the coming weeks, an online survey will be posted to the school website, and the entire community will be invited to share its views electronically.

In early November, Mark Stanek announced he had accepted the appointment as director (head of school) at the Shady Hill School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, starting July 1, 2010. He characterized the decision as a difficult one, influenced by the wish to work in a smaller setting (a prek-8 school on one campus) and to return home to the Boston area. The ECF board of trustees appointed Joyce Evans to serve as ECF's interim head of school for the academic year 2010-2011. Evans, who is currently serving as interim principal of Ethical Culture, has a long and distinguished history in educational leadership, including 10 years as head at The Town School in New York City and five years as head at Redwood Day School in Oakland, California.



THE WATERMILL CENTER

New Principal for Ethical Culture

ECF has just announced that Elka Rifkin will be the next principal of Ethical Culture, effective July 1, 2010. Said Mark Stanek, head of school, "With her depth of experience, passion for progressive education, and active interest in the areas of service learning and diversity, Elka was the unanimous choice of the search committee, and we are delighted that she will be joining our community."

Elka Rifkin has been immersed in the world of progressive education throughout her career. She is currently the director of the lower school at the Ross School in Bridgehampton and East Hampton, New York, a position she has held for two years. Prior to that, she worked for 14 years at Hampton Day School/Morris Center (pre-nursery to 8th grade) in Bridgehampton, in

positions ranging from acting head of school to assistant head of school and curriculum coordinator. She has a B.A. in fine arts from Colorado State University and a master's in educational technology from Long Island University.

Rifkin said, "I have always admired Ethical Culture and its mission from afar, but when I got to the school and saw how you are living the mission, I became very excited."

The search for the new principal of Ethical Culture, begun in September 2009, involved the whole community and resulted in three exceptional finalists, each of whom spent a day at the school, getting to know teachers, parents, administrators, staff, and students. The priorities to be addressed by the new principal include curriculum articulation, faculty professional development, examination of the current schedule,

and continued growth as a progressive school and as a diverse and inclusive community.

Alumni Volunteer Network Forges Ahead at February and March Meetings

The AVN met for the second time this school year on February 4 at Ethical Culture to hear a presentation by Michael Hwang, ECF's CFO. Alumni volunteers spanning class years 1952 through 1996 gained insight into the budgeting process and how ECF relies on the annual fund. The presentation was designed to educate alumni volunteers and contextualize the push to raise participation. In addition to thoughtful questions about the school's endowment and how ECF's annual fund compares to its peer schools, alumni enjoyed an opportunity to catch up



TOBY HIMMEL

Sharing Ways to Do Service

From left to right, Liz Fernández, Form III Dean; Erica T. Dubno '85, head volunteer coach for Manhattan's Special Olympics; Chris Dolin '77, founder of Creative Arts Workshops for Kids; Ralina Miriam Cardona '88, Acrescendo, Inc.; Lauren Wechsler Horn '87, a consultant for non-profits; and Tai-Chien Bassin '11. Not pictured but present: Lexy Mayers '88, director of Room to Grow.

and make new connections. On March 4, at a subsequent AVN meeting, Sarah Danzig Simon '96, director of alumni giving, and Whitney Namm Pollack, director of institutional advancement and alumni, followed up with an information session called "The Philanthropic Case for ECF."

Class of 2013: Living the Mission

One of the hallmarks of the Ethical Culture Fieldston School has been its historic commitment to community service. In this spirit, Form III Dean Liz Fernández created the class of 2013 service initiative, which kicked off in January, assisted by a team of committed parent volunteers, students, and alumni. The new four-year program was created for the class of 2013 to further instill a lifelong commitment to service. At a special form meeting, a panel comprised of one current student and five alumni (see above) discussed volunteerism, board membership, advocacy, and not-for-profit field work. This year's project culminates with the students' day of service at their selected nonprofit organization on April 26th. Look for more on their day of service in the next issue.



AKIN DORSETT '88

Alumni Basketball Game at Winterfest 2010

Winterfest 2010 hosted a co-ed alumni basketball game. Following both the girls and boys varsity games, alumni took over the court for an exciting game of 5-on-5. The teams pounded it out for two 15-minute halves, which ended with the White team's two-point victory over the Orange team (32-30). From the witty commentary of announcer Rick Cohen '70 to the playful banter of referees Steve Bluth and Randy Slaughter, all attending had a great time and left eager for another shot!

Lipton Thompson '07, Sewit Haile '01, Jennie Werts '03, Mike Shane '03 (boys varsity assistant coach), and Raechel Shaw '08 played for the Orange team (pictured at left, above). The White team included soon-to-be-alumnus Kevin Chenault '10, Noah Hutton '05, Naya-Joi Martin '05, Meredith Greenberg '07, and Leon Dunklin '86 (pictured at left, below).