



NORTHFIELD MOUNT HERMON SCHOOL

Office of the Head of School

June 2007

Dear Members of the NMH Community,

NMH reunions always remind me that our educational aims inspire the best in both the young and the more seasoned. Even as the school evolves, the basic tenets of an education for the head, heart, and hand remain fundamental to our program. At various points during reunion, many alumni commented to me that the school they see today is one they are proud to call theirs.

That NMH has changed over the years is hardly worth observing. The essential questions are “What has NMH become?” and “What principles guide the school’s future direction?” With these questions in mind, alumni came to campus in June and found the school’s values and traditions not simply extant, but thriving. One member of the class of 2007 captured the essence of the moment for NMH when she thoughtfully said, “We aren’t changing into something new. We are steadily becoming more distinctly ourselves.”

This is an exciting time for NMH, though not without challenges. Our focus is on preparing our current students to make—in small and large ways—a positive difference in the world. This is a tall order, but one that could not be more important. Our collective eyes are on three values: academic excellence, care for our students, and community with a capital “C.” At NMH, caring creates excellence. Once a student cares enough to do something extraordinarily well, she or he has developed a new standard of excellence and will strive, from that point on, always to do as well or better.

The class of 2007 embodies these principles and is well launched for college and for life, anchored in values and relationships developed here. The crude measures of testing and college selections boast the talents of this class: ten percent received recognition from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation; class members were admitted to the most selective colleges at twice the rate of the national average; and all of the Ivy Leagues schools admitted NMH students.

Our faculty and staff are directly responsible for inspiring students and making NMH successful. These talented adults continue to consider the best way to educate our students, and this year adjusted the academic schedule and requirements for participating in the cocurriculum, the work program, and athletics. They also understand the skill set required of successful citizens and leaders of the 21st century; therefore, they teach a wealth of interdisciplinary courses as well as courses in traditional disciplines.

We recently hired an extraordinary dean of faculty, Hugh Silbaugh, who has held senior positions at the Putney School and, most recently, at Milton Academy. He is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Amherst College, with advanced degrees from UCLA and Harvard. Hugh's experience and intellect promise to enrich our academic program.

As NMH evolves, philanthropic support and interest in admission are growing equivalently. With Allyson Goodwin '83 in place as our chief advancement officer, we have increased our capital giving over last year by \$1.6 million, and our annual fund is tracking about six percent higher. All the admission trends are positive, with a huge increase in inquiries and applications for ninth grade. Our selectivity and academic quality ratings have improved meaningfully, and the number of legacy applicants is growing.

The campus itself is taking shape beautifully. Work on The Rhodes Center for the Arts is on budget and on time, and the building will be LEEDS certified. We celebrated the completion of the steel structure with a traditional "topping off" ceremony this spring, and we expect completion in fall 2008, with a gala opening the following spring. Master planning work, including capital program enhancements for athletic and academic facilities, continues.

We certainly have accomplished much over the past three years. Looking ahead—with faculty having just completed the self-study for the NEASC reaccreditation process, and students settled into our one-campus school—we have kicked off a strategic planning process that will guide our next steps.

Faculty, staff, students, parents, alumni, and friends of the school will participate in surveys, focus groups, and other planning sessions this summer through next fall. I expect a draft plan next February. This planning, led by our board of trustees and senior administrators, will allow us to identify key initiatives for the next several years, and it will also clarify the objectives of our comprehensive campaign. You will be hearing more about both in the coming months. By the way, we are communicating more and more with our community members electronically. Please be sure to send us your correct e-mail address if you have not done so already.

I know of no other school that inspires such passion and ownership in its students, alumni, and parents. Thank you for your encouragement and support. Together we have much to offer our current and future students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas K. Sturtevant". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Thomas K. Sturtevant
Head of School