



Northfield Mount Hermon  
Office of the Head of School

September 23, 2011

Dear Members of the Northfield Mount Hermon Community,

Leaves are already turning color on the hill, the air is feeling crisp, and a new academic year is underway. The campus is humming with energy and the anticipation that accompanies beginnings. As many of you probably know, the year got underway with some unscripted drama. Tropical Storm Irene affected student arrivals and our scheduled registration and orientation. Welcoming challenge in traditional NMH form, we turned storm management into a memorable bonding experience on campus. More than 300 students teamed up with our facilities staff to clean up the campus in Irene's wake, providing an immediate opportunity for new students to experience our commitment to service and to one another at NMH.

It was a pleasure for me to meet new and returning students and their families at registration. I was delighted to shake every new student's hand after each one signed the Book at Matriculation, following in the footsteps of generations of students who have done the very same thing as they began their NMH careers. Twelve alumni on the faculty and staff joined me in extending this traditional and very personal welcome.

Nathaniel Rehm-Daly '12 welcomed fellow students during Convocation ceremonies with a moment of silence that began with the following words from Ralph Waldo Emerson: "We are all inventors, each sailing out on a voyage of discovery, guided by a private chart, of which there is no duplicate. The world is all gates, all opportunities." Nate clearly reminds us to equip and empower our students to aim high and to act with humanity and purpose. These are weighty responsibilities as we work to maintain the Moody legacy and provide an education for the head, heart, and hand.

Just like the students who gathered at Convocation to embrace the opportunities before them, I, too, face new responsibilities as I enter my 14th year at NMH. It is an honor to lead NMH this year, and I will work tirelessly, supported by an exceptionally talented and dedicated faculty and staff, to ensure our students have every chance to engage their intellect, compassion, and talents in a learning environment that inspires the best in each of us. We are off to a great start.

Our school is fully enrolled this fall, with students from 32 states and 44 countries, following another successful admission cycle. Many people, not just the team in admission, play a role in the admission process, and we are grateful to all the faculty, alumni, trustees, staff, and current NMH families who helped spread the word that NMH is the place to be. After three consecutive years of significant success on the enrollment front, it is clear that we stand out among our peers in some obvious and important ways. Families looking at schools are particularly struck by our excellence without pretense, our relevant curriculum with opportunities for interdisciplinary and international study, our work program, our close-knit and supportive community, our combination of tradition and innovation, our competitive athletics and exceptional arts programs, and our stunning location on the banks of the Connecticut River. In combination, these strengths—and others—make the NMH experience hard to resist.

While some heroes among the faculty and staff have retired, NMH continues to attract and retain uncommonly talented new members of the community. The adults at NMH care about the young people here, and they embrace the role they play as inspirational mentors inside the classroom and beyond. This past summer, faculty and students participated in successful immersion programs in Uruguay and China. The NMH robotics club competed in Turkey. Many faculty members participated in valuable professional development activities, and all entered their classrooms this fall eager to share their expertise and challenge their students. Our student-to-teacher ratio is 7:1, and our student-to-advisor ratio is 6:1. Educating NMH students means knowing each one of them individually and well. We do.

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The campus looks great after much renovation and construction work during the summer. The center steam line project was completed ahead of schedule and will bear dividends in terms of efficiencies and savings for years to come. Students in Shea Cottage have pledged to make theirs the first “green dorm” on campus by living with a smaller energy footprint; this represents just the latest expression of NMH’s commitment to sustainability. The NMH Farm just participated in local Cheese Days, is harvesting raspberries, and is about to install a new barn cupola built by students and a retired NMH carpenter. I love visiting the playing fields in the afternoons and catching glimpses of our student-athletes pushing themselves and one another; some of our teams and individual athletes have the potential to do really big things this year, further solidifying NMH’s reputation as fertile recruiting ground for coaches looking for athletes with what it takes to compete at the collegiate level. And as much as I enjoy the many varied sounds as I move about campus, I also appreciate the quiet moments and spaces that foster reflection and opportunities for spiritual growth.

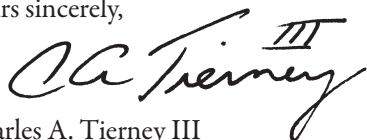
This year marks the centennial for several buildings on campus: Crossley Hall, Schauffler Memorial Library, and Ford Cottage. Our campus master planning efforts are moving forward, and we also are studying energy use on campus. The emerging master plan, which will be presented to the board of trustees in October, identifies a new science and math center as a key goal—one that will enhance both the learning and teaching experience at NMH and the school’s competitive position. In October, we will dedicate the Lois C. Chiles Theater in the Rhodes Arts Center, which already is abuzz with creative energy and activity. MacArthur “genius grant” recipient Anna Schuleit ’93 opened her art show in the RAC and will visit NMH drawing and painting classes later this fall. Students in our many performing groups are busy rehearsing for upcoming performances, including this fall’s musical production of “Curtains.”

The school’s fundraising efforts continue to be successful—a reflection of shared pride and excitement about NMH among the school’s alumni, parents, and friends. In the fiscal year that closed June 30, we experienced a 25 percent increase in cash raised and also an increase in donations at the D.L. Moody Society level (\$1,879 and greater). Gifts to the school’s Annual Fund ranged from \$1 to \$250,000, so clearly there is room for everyone! I encourage those who have never given before to make this the year they decide to participate, and I also hope those who do traditionally give will make this the year of their best gift ever. The philanthropic support NMH receives—and depends on—makes a tremendous and lasting difference.

Our recent alumni survey indicated that nearly 95 percent of alumni are proud of NMH. I could not be more proud myself. The school’s trustees, leadership team, and faculty and staff feel confident setting our sights high on the fundraising front and all fronts. We are in the fortunate position of being able to draw on a record of achievement, institutional strength, and great momentum as we forge ahead. You will have an opportunity to read about many of the great people and wonderful programs at NMH in the fall issue of *NMH Magazine* and in the periodic electronic updates you receive via email. (If you have not provided us your email address, please do, so we can keep you well informed.) Of course, you do not need to wait for an email or a magazine to arrive; we work hard to keep you updated by posting news, stories, videos, and pictures on the NMH website, on the school’s Facebook page, and through other social media. I hope you check in frequently to find out what’s happening on our hill.

With Matriculation, Convocation, HogOlympics, HoggerFair, and Rope Pull already behind us, we now look forward to Family Days, Mountain Day, the Pie Race, and, of course, lots of hard work—in the classrooms, on the fields, in the dormitories, on stage and in studios, in our offices, and in service to our community. In her Spade Oration at Convocation, Iris Kim ’12 greeted the new year by reminding fellow students and the rest of us of the importance of working hard. “Our days are limited, and we don’t want to let this opportunity pass by without having grown and felt the changes from beginning to end,” she said of the “journey at NMH.” She closed her speech by saying, “This is a new year, a fresh start. Let’s work hard, and grow.” That certainly is our collective intention, and I look forward to sharing more updates on the fruits of our labors in coming months. In the meantime, enjoy the change of seasons and your own new beginnings. And please visit campus whenever you can.

Yours sincerely,



Charles A. Tierney III  
Head of School