



October 5, 2018

Dear Parents,

When I was last in touch, I suggested this letter would be arriving with fall upon us and the school in full stride. While the beginning to the year was a bit more unsettled than a typical start, we have found our way to a nice pace and rhythm as the leaves on campus begin to turn. We have already enjoyed a few spectacular fall days and will have many more before Thanksgiving vacation arrives six weeks from tomorrow. We will strive to get as much as we can out of this beautiful time of year.

By this point, your children have made their way through the first wave of major academic assessments and have found their way to a routine that feels more familiar with each passing day. Life outside of the classroom has taken off with athletic teams getting into ISL competition and afternoon programs in full swing. I enjoy the privilege of observing our students and faculty members pouring themselves into classes and activities they care so much about. This feeds the work we do externally with alumni, alumnae, and prospective students and families. While I always find it challenging to adequately convey all that I am proud of about our school at admission receptions and the like, I never need to look farther than the past week or so when trying to illuminate what is special about Brooks. Here is some of what we have been up to over the past 10 days:

The eighth annual Nametag Party was a huge success. If you are the parent of a new student, or a returning student in a leadership position, I hope you heard good returns about this action-packed hour last Tuesday night. With something in the neighborhood of 800 nametags stuck to us in ways that expedite the Hello Campaign and our desire to know one another, we packed the first floor of my home and left with the mission accomplished. I have \$5 Brooks Bucks bills in my pocket at all times and have been handing some out as students catch me unable to recall their name. To date, I have put \$70 into circulation with hope that more will ask and I can stem the tide over the next couple of weeks!

I enjoyed having time with a number of you at the Parents Committee meeting last Friday afternoon. In addition to sharing a few thoughts about the start to the year and some of what our board of trustees considered while here two weeks ago, I appreciated being able to debrief about the gas fires and scare that we all worked through earlier in September. While we continue to feel fortunate that our campus was not directly impacted, we have given some thought to our communication protocols and ways in which we might do better should something comparable come our way in the future. We all continue to be so appreciative of your willingness to partner with us during these unpredictable moments in order to ensure that your children and our students are as safe as they can be.

In between the Nametag Party and Parents Committee meeting, I was in New York for two days last week visiting with some alums and attending an admission reception. With Samantha Grant '14 and Acacia Nunes '14 joining us to meet prospective students and families last Thursday evening, we were well equipped with current perspective about

Brooks from two alumni who are just starting their professional lives. There is no substitute for firsthand experiences, and this also held true at our open house this past Saturday. With many of you and your children leading the way, well over 100 families had an opportunity to meet with faculty members, learn about areas of interest, and even get an early look at the Center for the Arts. We have heard from a number who appreciated their time on campus and are on their way to interviews. So, thank you for helping make this important day such a success!

If you were on campus this past Saturday, you also know that our Homecoming and Hall of Fame induction ceremony took place through the afternoon. This was great fun with so many enjoying the day and a chance to celebrate an extraordinary slate of inductees. I would encourage you to read more about the four individuals and one team we inducted [HERE](#). An interesting note about the group, which includes athletes who have competed in Olympic games and international competitions at the peak of their respective sports, is that all of them first learned to play sports they excelled in at Brooks. I am hoping we can find ways to share this fact with current students who are sometimes drawn to a notion that they can only spend time on one sport or area of focus. One would be hard pressed to find a more impressive group of high school athletes from any school or era. We can learn a lot from their examples.

Yesterday morning, we were all treated to an incredible talk in Chapel by Roseann Sdoia. Roseann is a Boston Marathon bombing survivor and motivational speaker with an extraordinary story. You can learn more about her at <https://robostrong.com>. Her message about finding strength to go forward was both moving and inspiring. I suspect your children will be talking about her visit for some time to come.

Before turning to some of what lies ahead, I want to thank Denise and Graham Marks P'19 for hosting a wonderful reception for prospective families last night. Much like our event in New York, this was a great opportunity for many to learn about Brooks for the first time, or to take another step in our direction. We had a handful of current students in attendance who compellingly reflected on aspects of their Brooks experience. They were the stars of the evening and will have much to do with why so many of these prospective students will visit campus, interview, and apply later in the year. I was proud to be among them.

Looking ahead, we are excited to have a number of boys 1st soccer team alumni returning to campus tomorrow afternoon and evening to see our game versus Middlesex School ahead of a celebration of Dusty Richard's 40 years as head coach of that team. As many of you know, Dusty will be retiring this year at the end of his 41st year at Brooks. With more than 80 people coming with graduating years stretching from 1979 to 2016, this will be an evening testifying to the depth of his impact and reach with so many former players for whom this experience mattered profoundly. I spent my first 18 years at Brooks coaching with Dusty in the fall and am looking forward to this boys soccer reunion.

I am also looking forward to the school getting a couple of days off in a row this weekend. While it is not and will not likely become a habit in our calendar, the combination of an early start to the school year, an early Columbus Day holiday, and a late Family Weekend left us feeling that this might be a good time for Brooks School's version of a long weekend. I hope this allows many of you a bit of extra time with your child over the next few days.

On Wednesday of next week, we will take a break from classes in order to administer the PSAT to the fourth and fifth form. The third form will spend the morning in an anti-harassment workshop, and the sixth form will work on their college essays with faculty members. Looking out a bit further into the future, I want to thank Nancy and Tom Ferry P'21 in advance for hosting our next admission reception in their West Newton, Mass., home on Tuesday, October 16, at 6:30 p.m. This will be our final reception of this type during the fall, and we are looking forward to having an opportunity to meet all who are planning to attend. Finally, we are just three weeks away from Family Weekend. By then, the Center for the Arts will be just about complete. While we do not envision being able to have classes in

the building until the following week, we are planning to have the space open at points with opportunities for all of you to make your way around this extraordinary facility.

Before closing, I want to encourage all of you to make time to enjoy *Friends and Family* in the Robert Lehman Art Center. The center's director, Amy Graham, pulled together eight wonderful artists who all have a personal connection to Brooks. This contributed to a fun and full opening last Friday night with students, faculty members, and friends joining the artists, and all of the amazing work on the walls and throughout the space. The show runs through Friday, October 19, and I hope you will have a chance to enjoy it!

I look forward to being in touch later this month when Family Weekend draws near. Until then, take good care and please be in touch if I can be of help in any way.

Best,

John R. Packard
Head of School

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