

# The Magnet

CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL HUMANITIES MAGNET

JANUARY 2009

## Magnet Experience Night for Parents



## Oh What a Night: What a Magnet Experience

We all hear bits and pieces about what the students experience in CORE. But it is not until you experience CORE first-hand that you truly capture the magic. About 200 parents of CORE students in all four grade levels had that opportunity on November 20, 2008 with the annual Magnet Parents Experience Night, sponsored by the Magnet Parents Association. During the two-hour session, the CORE teachers took groups of participating parents through workshops by grade-level, showing them what the students do in typical classes. Parents interacted with their "classmates" and the teachers in challenging but fun exercises and simulations. As one example, parents of eleventh graders learned about the concepts behind "found objects as art," which is part of the eleventh grade Great Gatsby unit. In addition to working in teams to describe everyday objects as art, parents also worked on character analyses from the novel, developing highly creative metaphors, which is just one part of what the students do in their activities. Parents were also shown examples of artwork created by students for the Gatsby Dinner Party, which current CORE students were about to begin work on when the Experience Night took place.



## So Where Does Our Money Go?

Along with keeping parents involved and up-to-speed on what our students are doing in school, the MPA fundraises to support the needs of the Cleveland Humanities Magnet program. At the November 2008 MPA meeting, Mr. Lemmon presented an update on the status and needs of the Magnet budget, giving parents and guests information about where our funds are needed and applied.

The Magnet's annual budget is normally about \$135,000. Like all LAUSD schools, the Magnet has two categories of funds: categorical, which are restricted funds provided by traditional sources of funding such as Title 1 funds, and non-categorical funds that have no restrictions. The funds raised by the MPA, under the Friends of Cleveland booster club 501(c) 3 umbrella organization, is the Magnet's only source of monies for these non-categorical funds. The use of categorical funds is impacted by certain mandates that govern how the money is spent. These mandates are often not in alignment with the needs of the Magnet program. For example, state law requires that textbooks be purchased despite the fact the Magnet does not use textbooks for its Core classes.

Non-categorical funds allow the Magnet the freedom to support the program and the needs of its curriculum. Monies raised are used for luncheons and special activities, field trip buses, tickets and entrance fees, guest speakers and performers, DVDs, office supplies, the annual teacher retreat, maintenance for the new copier (purchased with funds from the MPA), art supplies, and teacher conferences. As a result, the 9th grade will have three luncheons, the 10th grade has a Greek Symposium, the 11th grade goes on a number of field trips and participates in the Gatsby Dinner Party, and the seniors go on two field trips and have an awards luncheon. Field trip buses alone cost the program \$10,000-12,000 annually (at \$350 per bus with four buses per trip).

We started this year \$15,000 less than last year, in part because of a reduction in monies from the gifted budget. Now, budget cuts have taken us to over \$30,000.

The MPA strives to support the Magnet in any way we can, from fundraising to sharing information to advocating on behalf of our students and the program. Our annual fundraising drive has netted us nearly \$25,000 to date, but, as you can see, we will still need to do more. Stay tuned for more details early in 2009.

## CORE Grade Updates

### 9th grade from Donna Hill

As you may already know, the first unit of the ninth grade year is not interdisciplinary. We believe it is necessary to teach the specific vocabulary, concepts and skills for each discipline before the first interdisciplinary unit. However, with the Mexican Unit we begin to integrate the four disciplines of science, social institutions, art/religion, and literature. The theme that connects the curriculum in each class is the importance of land: beliefs about land and uses of it. Science class explains the origins of domestication of land, natural and human selection of vegetation and how humans continue to gain more and more control over the environment. Both social institutions and art/religion begin with the development of Aztec culture from nomadic to sedentary city-states, emphasizing the change from total dependence on the land to increased control over it. The Spanish Conquest imposes a culture that brings even more human control of land and resources. Literature examines the Mexican American novel, *Bless Me, Ultima*. The protagonist, Antonio Marez Luna, lives in a rural area where his mother's family is composed of farmers descended from the Aztecs who work closely with the land and his father's family descended from the Spanish Conquistadores who ride on the land as vaqueros (cowboys). *Ultima*, the curandera, comes to live with the family and introduces Antonio to using the land for healing purposes by gathering herbs. The first interdisciplinary unit exam (IUE) is scheduled for Friday, December 19, 2008. Please be aware that although I have emphasized those aspects of each discipline that are related to the theme, each of us teaches curriculum that is expanded beyond what is selected for the IUE.

### 10th grade from Ric Posito

First off, the CORE 10 Team would like to thank all of you who came out to have a bit of fun with us for "The Magnet Experience" a few weeks ago. We truly hope that it was both entertaining as well as enlightening with regard to a taste of the curriculum and methodology that we subject your children to on a daily basis. As we move from Unit One to Unit Two, we leave the seat of Western Civilization with the Greeks, on to the decadence and corruption of the Roman Empire and then to study the transition from the West's embrace of poly- to monotheism. We will take a careful look at the myriad of ways in which the existence of the gods of the ancient worlds were influential in the shaping of monotheism, first in Judaism and later in Christianity. In all four classes, one of the fundamental questions posed will be the following: "To what degree was the shift to a dominant monotheistic belief system throughout Europe a 'borrowing' of the earlier iconography and philosophy of various polytheistic belief systems?" To be certain, this will be a somewhat challenging unit, asking the students to read texts such as *The Book of Genesis*, *The Stories of Moses and Job*, *The Gospel According to Matthew* and John Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost* (where we see the Fall of Man from Satan's As we have all said in our classes, we are not here to convert anyone to Satanism, or follow the Core Team to Hell; simply to be able to look at the texts from a standpoint removed from blind faith. This should prove to be very informative as well as the consumption of a fabulous meal.

Continued on next page

## Magnet Parent Association Meeting Dates:

Please join us

- January 21 • February 18
- March 18th • April 22 • May 20

Meetings start at 7:00 p.m. in the Parents Resource Room located behind the MPR and Cafeteria.

- Special Thanks To -

Patricia Burgueno for hosting our events.

The Magnet is brought to you by:

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# The Cuts Are Deep But Not Insurmountable

Before I address the bad news, I want to begin this submission by conveying my deepest appreciation to all of you who contributed to our Fall Fundraiser. By donating nearly \$25,000, you have helped to keep our program functioning smoothly this semester. The commitment of our parents continues to be one of the key reasons for our success.

As we turn to the more depressing topic of the budget, I am sorry to report that we will be funded approximately \$30,000 (or 25%) less than last year. The good news is that we will not lose any staff or be forced to raise class sizes.

While these cuts are a nuisance, we should not allow them to affect the quality of our student's educational experience. This will require us to be more creative and thrifter, but I am hopeful that we can continue through this school year without any significant disruptions to our program.

In any case, just know that we are working hard to ensure that your students receive the education that they deserve. Thanks again for your support, and I wish you all an enjoyable Winter Break.

Sincerely,  
**Gabriel Lemmon**

## Magnet Fieldtrips are Revolutionary



On November 26 and December 2, our 9th grade team of students went to the Fowler Museum at UCLA on a caravan of yellow, smoke-puffing school buses to see *Caras Vemos*, *Corazones No Sabemos/Faces Seen*, *Hearts Unknown: The Human Landscape of Mexican Migration* and *La tinta grita/The Ink Shouts: The Art of Social Resistance in Oaxaca, Mexico*, to coincide with our unit on Mexico.

Our extremely well behaved students saw installations as seen through Chicano/Mexican artists, featuring paintings, works on paper, photographs and video, exploring the struggles and visions of migrants, as well as their spiritual practices and the roles of these traditions during difficult journeys. To coincide with this exhibit, students also learned about the recent political struggle in Oaxaca where artists used the city walls as a canvas for conveying their outrage over social injustice. Captivated by our informative docents, eager students interacted by asking and answering questions about select pieces, while wall-sized wood block cuts symbolizing the conquest of the new world and a gigantic Virgin of Guadalupe imposed on a screen showing a film of a Texas town where nineteen immigrants suffocated in a refrigerated cargo truck, while trying to make it across the border for a new life in the USA, loomed over their curious heads.

Afterwards, students had an opportunity to experience campus life, while spending time at UCLA's Ackerman Union for lunch. 9th grader Tamara Koretz said about the fieldtrip, "It was rad!" 9th grader Madeline Carter said, "It is great to get out of the four walled confines of the classroom to experience Mexican culture first hand."

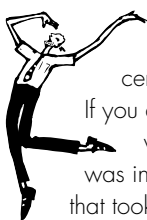
Subsequently the teachers would like to thank the students for conducting themselves as polite, stellar, conscious minded scholars.

### CORE Grade Updates continued from page 1

#### 11th grade from Jennifer Macon

Over the course of the last two months, we have been untangling the concepts that have become a part of our American mythology—meritocracy and the American Dream. Our purpose has been to examine how our culture supports the concept of meritocracy despite the social realities of class that are often hidden from our view. Your sons and daughters participated in a series of workshops that analyzed the traditional historical notion of the American Dream and highlighted some of the voices that had been left out of the original "Dream." Ms. Siegel lay the foundation of the American Dream by analyzing the Preamble to the Constitution for the promises made to "all" and the subsequent authors, clergymen, and businessmen that perpetuated the American mythology of individualism and success. In Ms. Hill's art/performance workshop, the students focused on the voices of eastern and southern Europeans who by the turn of the century found achieving success nearly impossible due to their exploitation and inhumane treatment, as they read selections of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* and created theatrical scenes about those difficulties. In Ms. Williams's Literature workshop, the students read Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and August Wilson's *Fences*, two quintessential American stories about the hardships associated with having the "wrong" dreams. And finally, in my philosophy workshop, we discussed the Transcendentalists, namely Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Walt Whitman, who were critical of the greed, spiritual corruption, and industrial destruction of nature that accompanied attaining the "Dream." We will conclude the unit by reading and recreating F. Scott Fitzgerald's quintessential American novel on the unfulfilled lives of the upper class, *The Great Gatsby* with our fabulous interpretation entitled "The Gatsby Dinner Party." We hope to see you on Thursday, December 18th at 6:00 pm in the MPR for food, art, performance, and fun!

#### 12th grade from Ray Linn



In exploring the history of modern thought and the changing views of human life, we have turned from the cheerful 18th and early 19th centuries to the Existential gloom of the later 19th and the 20th centuries. The gloom is expressed in two major themes of the period, alienation and the absurd world. If you asked why these themes became prominent in Existentialist literature and philosophy, part of the answer was a pervasive decline in the belief that God can help us with our problems on Earth. This decline was inspired by Darwin, but even more important were the horrors of the Great War, World War I—a war that took place for no discoverable reason, was enthusiastically welcomed throughout Western Europe, was fought stupidly in trench warfare, and finally ended in a disastrous peace after ten million soldiers had died. We'd like to think that such a catastrophe won't happen again, but our willingness to make war in Iraq is not a cheerful sign at the beginning of the 21st century.



## A note from the COREdinators

the Magnet's Student Activities Organizers

If you are surprised that December has crept upon you so quickly, then you are not alone. Here in E-1 we have a "To-Do" list that is just as long as our holiday wish lists. From planting the new garden outside of E-10 to making the COREner groups run smoothly (not to mention finishing up our college applications), we have our plates full. Keeping in step with our mission statement, we are currently working with on-campus organizations and learning communities to plant gardens throughout The Land. Despite some setbacks we have encountered with the COREner (a mentoring program for ninth grade students), we are dedicated to making it work. We have implemented training sessions for all Seniors to make sure that our ninth grade students get the most prepared mentors possible. Magnet tours began this past month and it has been rewarding talking to parents and students interested in our magnet. Finally, we have completed a movie short on what CORE is all about, appropriately dubbed *Kids on Core*. This movie will (hopefully) encourage more applicants to our program.

Submitted by Rachel Reyes



## NEW CORE TEACHER PROFILE: ....and the rest is history....Art History

Brett Shufelt, the new 10th grade Core Art History teacher, says he has an incurable illness: he is obsessed with the subject matter he teaches. His love of art is a long standing passion developed during his Humanities studies, which included time as a student at Cleveland High School. His connection to the school, however, is deeper than simply that of a former student: his mother was a Core teacher and he grew up with teachers among his friends and mentors.

Shufelt, born and raised in the San Fernando Valley, originally attended Los Angeles Baptist High School before transferring to Cleveland. As a teen, he was very much a by product of Southern California 90's culture, with a range of interests that included photography, skateboarding, Ska Punk (even playing in a band for a while), and surfing. After graduating in 2001, he attended Richmond the American University in London, where he majored in History and Art History.

After completion of his undergraduate studies, Shufelt managed a restaurant in West London. He traveled throughout Europe at every opportunity, visiting major galleries and historic sites in Paris, Florence, Rome and Berlin (among others). He spent many major holidays with friends in Bulgaria and Sweden, and traveled to Morocco and Egypt. His work history then included stints as a Quality Control Inspector for a major New York insurance company and at an Art Consultancy where he authenticated and priced works of fine art.

Shufelt is right at home on the faculty at Cleveland, and enjoys working closely with people he respects. "I have never been surrounded by such intelligent and compassionate individuals in the work place," he notes. "No one talks about Constantine or Nietzsche at the water cooler in the corporate world." He goes on to say that "the students are incredible....and they always keep me on my toes."

Not a day has passed that a student has not forced me to defend my ideas." He considers himself lucky to spend his days deconstructing the ideas that went into the art that has laid the foundation for American visual culture.

Through travel, Shufelt finds the best opportunity to experience and understand other lifestyles and points of view and he plans to travel from Bogota to Buenos Aires this summer. He has also planned ahead for the summer of 2010 (he will attend the World Cup in South Africa)....and for the summer of 2011 (to secure a position as an assistant restorationist for ancient Greek sites in the Aegean).

No doubt, Core students will benefit tremendously from this interesting and energetic teacher (and his obsession with Art History).

