

A Great Beginning Thanks to Outstanding Student Leadership

**DENNIS L. CALKINS
HEAD OF THE UPPER SCHOOL**

Here we go again – the beginning of another school year. As a life-long educator, I sometimes wonder whether all the beginnings and endings I have experienced in my life will begin to blend together to become a nebulous blob of handbook re-writings, new student luncheons, faculty orientations and students asking for schedule changes. At Holland Hall, there is little danger of that coming to pass. Every beginning is unique in the Upper School. What I will remember about the beginning of the 2009-10 school year is the leadership exhibited by so many students, especially by our senior class. In a small school like Holland Hall, positive student leadership often makes the difference between a memorable beginning and just another school year.

During the late summer months, athletic teams started practices with full rosters in every sport. Dutch spirit began early to plan activities for the fall athletic season. Steve Heldebrand reported that the student leaders of Dutch Spirit displayed the kind of enthusiasm and organizational ability rarely seen within this group. A group of enthusiastic seniors spent hours decorating the commons for the first day of school and our new freshmen were made to feel much more welcome than in past years.

After the first three days of school, our seniors hosted the freshmen on Sunday, Aug. 25 for an afternoon of activities to help welcome them to the Upper School. The girls spent the afternoon in the commons engaged in group games and activities and the boys played volleyball in the gym. Both groups were led by a small group of faculty members and a large group of seniors who dedicated the afternoon to helping our freshmen feel a part of the Upper School.

And finally, student leadership and enthusiasm within the classroom has been at least on par with what we have witnessed outside the classroom. With only one week behind us, I have heard from many faculty members on how enjoyable their classes are to teach, how eager and polite their students are, and how much they are anticipating what is in store for their students in 2009-10. Our great beginning bodes well for a school year filled with memorable and meaningful experiences for all of us.