

The Academy at Charlemont - Head of School Announcement - December 21, 2011

Dear Friends,

I write with exciting news. On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the Co-Chairs of the Head of School Search Committee, I am very pleased to announce that Mark Efinger has been named the new Head of the Academy at Charlemont, effective July 2012.

As many of you know, the Board of Trustees formed a search committee in June 2011, charged with ensuring that the selection process for the next head of school would be thorough, forward-looking, and exacting. The search committee was co-led by Peter Stevens and Win Healy, and included Nell Todd '93 and myself. We were all thrilled that the search – and, specifically, the Academy – generated so much interest. Over 40 people applied, including five highly qualified and talented candidates who were brought to campus for final interviews with trustees, parents, faculty and staff, and students. I would like to personally thank all those who contributed to this process, from providing feedback on the position description, to spending time with each of the finalists. Your support and participation were essential to the success of the search, and reminded all of us how fortunate we are that so many people are so dedicated to our school and its future.

During the selection process, the Committee and the Trustees looked for someone to lead the school to a more financially sustainable future, by broadening our donor base, attracting more applicants, and carefully managing our resources. At the same time, we knew such a person would have to be able to preserve and protect the best aspects of the Academy's unique culture, while identifying areas in which the Academy must evolve. Finally, we were looking for someone to lead our education program with confidence and creativity, to inspire our faculty and students, and to work cooperatively with parents, trustees, alumni and the local community to strengthen the Academy.

Mark Efinger is that person, and he exemplifies all of these important attributes. The Committee and the Trustees have great confidence that he will lead the Academy to an even stronger future, building on the success of Eric Grinnell, Todd Sumner and David Perry.

Mark received a BA in theatre from Middlebury College and a master's of fine arts in drama from the University of North Carolina. Since 1993, Mark has been on the faculty of Phillips Academy, Andover, having served as the chair of the theatre and dance department. He is currently the program manager for acting and directing. His work prior to joining Andover included experience in the private sector, particularly in the area of sales. Mark brings demonstrated fundraising, management, and marketing experience. He is creative, an engaging storyteller, and a strategic thinker – all of which will be critical to the Academy's continued success. He has already undertaken a constructive and intelligent review of our programs and resources and has offered new ideas that are sensitive to the school's history, culture, and location. Mark and his wife Cindy have developed a deep interest in the area and will be living in Windsor, MA. They are thrilled to make Windsor, the Academy, and the Hilltowns, their new home.

Upon accepting the position, Mark provided the following remarks:

“In great gratitude and deeply humbled, I write to express thanks for the trust put in me by your Board of Trustees, and for the careful process you have undertaken to select the next Head of School for the Academy at Charlemont.

As I write this I feel tremendous excitement, anticipating our journey together. During my visit, standing on the edge of Morning Meeting, there was an infectious sense of ownership that each of you demonstrated for this community of learners and the joyous pursuit of excellence. To become a member of this special team is now my fondest wish.

The Academy is fortunate to have been led by capable and devoted Heads in the past. To succeed Mr. Grinnell, Mr. Sumner and Mr. Perry, is to be blessed with the legacy of this past and the duty to honor it in the future, as we collectively look for ways to continue the growth of this very special school.

While I have not had the pleasure of hearing the thoughts of each of you yet, I have been so impressed by those I have encountered, that I look forward, with great enthusiasm, to meeting the rest of you in the near future.”

On behalf of the entire school community, I would like to extend a deeply personal thank you to David Perry, who has served as interim head this school year. David has inspired the faculty and students and we are all grateful for his exemplary leadership during this transitional year. David will continue as interim through the end of June and will be working closely with the trustees and Mark over the next six months to ensure a smooth transition.

This is an exciting time for the Academy, as for the first time in the school’s history we invite an educator from the outside to lead the school. The Academy faculty, students, alumni and community have always risen to the occasion during important moments in the school’s 30 year life. At this moment, it will be important for all of us to support Mark as he integrates himself into our community. This integration will take time, but Mark is more than up to the task. He is eager to become part of our family and is ready for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Please join me in welcoming Mark and his family to the Academy.
Have a wonderful holiday and please contact me directly with any questions.

Sincerely,
David Epstein '87
Chair, Academy Trustees
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