

## From the Headmaster

Dear Parents, Caregivers, Students, and Friends,

Each year we generate two new school-wide goals to guide our work with students and families. This year we will:

1. *Engage in reflective practice in order to better understand how we promote equity, access, interdisciplinary learning and mentoring.*
2. *Refine our assessment vision and grading practices to improve student achievement and begin to implement a digital portfolio system that connects to that vision.*

So, what do these wordy sentences really mean? And beyond that, how do we plan to do this?

Our commitment to equity and access has remained constant since we opened our doors in 1998. Equity means that all students and families get fair treatment. Access means that opportunities are available to everyone. We began this year by reading from Jonathan Kozol's *Shame of the Nation* and we will continue school-wide conversations about how BAA is/is not the same as some of Kozol's examples. We hope that Board members and parents will also read and share in these discussions.

We are working on specific action steps to improve teaching practices that will increase the success of young men of color. We are not excluding any other group. Instead, we are acknowledging aloud, and all together, how this group historically has achieved the least well at BAA and in most urban schools. To better serve our students we observe and critique one another as teachers and we also develop case studies of our work. This helps us think collaboratively about difficult questions involving teaching and learning, and develop better solutions to classroom challenges. We think together with students and families about defining success. We ask "Is what I deem success, as teacher, advisor or administrator, the same as my students' definition of success?" If not, why not? And, what does that do for instruction and advising? Can we have different definitions of success at BAA?

We also will focus our evolving interdisciplinary work in the 11th and 12th grade seminars, which have a new format. A final action on this first goal involves mentoring, including all of our students and families in the writing of advisory letters for mid-year and end-of-year portfolios. We want all of us reflecting on our work together.

Our concern remains about tying assessment to a standardized test score. Our second goal speaks to that concern in some fairly technical language. We are implementing a digital portfolio system that broadens our ability to demonstrate what our students know and can do. This system allows them to store their performances, work, and exhibitions digitally. Our students need to learn to display their knowledge in ways that adequately reflect their scholarship and their artistry. Students and teachers will implement aspects of the digital portfolio in sophomore arts benchmark and RICO reviews. We look forward to our students sharing their work with you in this new format. We also will examine how our assessment and grading practices promote success. Finally, we will re-align our advisory, narrative and midterm concern forms that we send to parents and caregivers. We want to give a clearer and more complete picture of students' strengths and challenges.

These are ambitious goals, and we feel well-prepared at this stage of our history to meet them. Our experiences, both as successes and tough challenges, have strengthened our abilities. One of those successes has been your involvement and reflection along the way. We won't get there without you.

Sincerely,



Linda Nathan

## Congratulations to our August graduates

Sean L. Alexander, Joseph Ray Eveillard, Russell Ferguson, Lorenzo D. Hooker III, Israel Francisco Rolon, Nko Nierrri Small and Christopher Speller successfully completed their graduation requirements over the summer. They celebrated with family, friends and staff in a ceremony at BAA on August 21. We thank Commencement Speaker Jose Powell for his inspiring words and Christopher Speller for his wonderful RICO speech. All August graduates plan to attend college this fall.

## Our new Family Coordinator

BAA welcomes Luz Maldonado, our new Family Coordinator.

Luz is currently working towards her Bachelor's degree in Human Services and Youth work at the University of Massachusetts Boston. She was raised in Puerto Rico and moved to Boston in 1989. With two children in the Boston Public Schools, she understands the importance of parent involvement and the connections between families and their communities.

Luz can be found in the Student Support Office on the first floor in Room 111. Her phone is 617/635-6470 x 102 and she can also be reached by email [lmaldonado@bostonartsacademy.org](mailto:lmaldonado@bostonartsacademy.org).



Ms. Luz Maldonado

As always, keep a lookout for your monthly Parent/Caregiver Calendar insert with your newsletter. Also check the school website for updated information on events [www.bostonartsacademy.org](http://www.bostonartsacademy.org).

## Important Parent/Caregiver Dates

Date and Place	Event	Contact	Contact Info
Thurs. October 4th 8 am-3 pm @ BAA	Family Day	Ms. Maldonado	617/635-6470 x 102 <a href="mailto:lmaldonado@bostonartsacademy.org">lmaldonado@bostonartsacademy.org</a>
Tues. October 9th BAA Assembly Hall	Parent/Caregiver Council Meeting	Ms. Maldonado	617/635-6470 x 102 <a href="mailto:lmaldonado@bostonartsacademy.org">lmaldonado@bostonartsacademy.org</a>
Wed. October 10th BAA Assembly Hall	Junior Parent Night	Ms. Hairston	617-635-6470, ext. 121 <a href="mailto:chairston@bostonartsacademy.org">chairston@bostonartsacademy.org</a>
Wed. October 17th @ 9 am, 11 am, & 1 pm Mass College of Art 621 Huntington Ave.	Outreach Recruitment Performances	Ms. Bonilla	617-590-8071 <a href="mailto:bbonilla@bostonartsacademy.org">bbonilla@bostonartsacademy.org</a>
Fri. October 26th BAA Cafeteria	BAA/Fenway College Fair	Ms. Hairston	617-635-6470, ext. 121 <a href="mailto:chairston@bostonartsacademy.org">chairston@bostonartsacademy.org</a>



BAA neighbor David Ortiz with his issue of *Entre Amigos*.

## What is he reading?

Yes, that's our own Co-Headmaster on the cover of *Entre Amigos* magazine! David "Big Papi" Ortiz holds the July 2007 edition, which featured Carmen Torres on the cover along with a two-page photo spread and interview.

## Apply to BAA Online!

Prospective students may now apply online for the 2008-09 School Year.

Visit our website for details.

[www.bostonartsacademy.org](http://www.bostonartsacademy.org)

**Co-Headmaster** Linda Nathan  
**Co-Headmaster** Carmen Torres  
**Artistic Dean** Fernadina Chan  
**Ex. Dir. BAA Foundation** Rick Tagliaferri  
**Communications Director** Helen Russell  
**Editing & Layout:** Dani Coleman  
**Photography:** Phyllis Bretholtz  
Helen Russell

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BOSTON ARTS ACADEMY is a collaborative project between the Boston Public Schools and the ProArts Consortium, an association of six internationally known institutions of higher learning. Each specializes in the visual arts, performing arts and architecture: Berklee College of Music  
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## Make BAA your homepage!

The school's website is an invaluable tool for families and includes the Student Handbook, important dates, teacher contact info, and information for families. Know anybody interested in applying to BAA for the 2008-09 school year? You can now apply online! Read about Ms. Nathan's trip to Africa! Visit: [www.bostonartsacademy.org](http://www.bostonartsacademy.org).

## Student Summer Activities: Leadership and Community Service

This summer, three students, Jay Cottle, Darnell Hardin and George Om were awarded scholarships to attend the Boston Center for Community Justice (BCCJ) Leadership Initiative. Youth who come to this program live and engage in dialog with youth from a wide variety of diverse backgrounds. Through experiential exercises, small group discussion, and community building with a diverse group of Greater Boston youth, we strengthen our understanding of prejudice, our leadership skills, and our commitment to acting for social justice. These students will be participating in a year-long community service initiative at BCCJ.

### BAA welcomes new staff & faculty

Maha Chourafa, Registrar  
Luz Maldonado, Family Advocate  
Meg O'Brien, Retention Specialist  
Emilio Gonzalez, Curriculum Specialist  
Julie Larson, Technology Coordinator  
John Adekoje, Theatre Faculty  
Jenna McFarland-Lord, Theatre Faculty  
Monika Aldarondo, Humanities Faculty  
Steven Bentley, Science Faculty  
Patricia de la Rosa, World Languages Faculty

Please visit the BAA Website to read bios from our newest community members.

### Annual Pilot School Conference

Wed. October 24, 2007 12-3 pm  
Topic : Literacy

Boston Community Leadership Academy  
20 Warren Street, Brighton

Parents are encouraged to attend.  
Please call 617-584-2024 to register.  
This event is free and lunch is provided.

## Our 10th Opening Day!

On September 6th BAA welcomed 440 students, including 138 new students for the 2007-2008 school year at our opening day ceremony, held inside Fenway Park. Thanks to the Boston Red Sox and Sarah McKenna, Director of Fan and Neighborhood Services, for this unique opportunity to start our school year.



BAA students cheer as faculty and staff are introduced at Fenway Park on Opening Day.

### Important Dates\*

#### Tuesday, October 2

SAT Registration

#### Thursday, October 4

Family Open House†

#### Saturday, October 6

SATs at various city locationst

#### Monday, October 8

Columbus Day: **No School†**

#### Tuesday, October 9

Parent/Caregiver Mtg. 6-7:30 pm  
Assembly Hall @ BAA†

#### Wednesday, October 10

Junior Parent Night @ BAA†

#### Week of October 15

South African Printmakers  
Artist-in-Residence (see below)

#### Wednesday, October 17

Outreach/Recruitment  
Performances @ MassArt  
9 am, 11 am and 1 pm  
performances

#### Saturday, October 20

PSATs @ BAA 8 am

**For All 10th & 11th Gr. Studentst**

#### Friday, October 26

BAA/Fenway College Fair

#### Monday, October 29

Dr. Desmond Tutu visits BAA  
*See website for details*

#### Friday, November 2

Term 1 ends

#### Saturday, November 3

SATs at various city locationst

#### Monday, November 5

Professional Day for Teachers  
**No School for Students**

\* Calendar events are subject to change.  
Please call to confirm times and dates.

† Important parent/caregiver date!

## Artists-in-Residence

We are thrilled to host two members of Artist Proof Studios, Motsamai Alfred Thabane and Molefe Thwala, who will be visiting artists at BAA during the week of October 15. Both printmakers come from South Africa, where Ms. Linda Nathan met them this summer while traveling there as part of her Barr Fellowship.

Please visit the website to read about them and see examples of their work.

## BAA families



*BAA senior, Sergio Merry with his niece Irchiya Robert, and his mother Idalia Bernard at the Family Orientation in September. Over 175 families attended, the most ever. We welcome all new students and families!*

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