THE PARK SCHOOL *of* BALTIMORE

Dear Students and Parents,

Today, the latest edition of *Postscript* came out and there are some compelling articles in this issue. Specifically, a Features piece, written by senior Arenal Haut, takes on sexism at Park and includes perspectives of several young women who speak to experiences they have had in the classroom. It also republishes some of the words and experiences from alumnae who participated in the Senior Girls' Lunch a few years ago. Collectively, their stories are disturbing. We must not turn away.

The testimony of our young women is important. Reading their words in *Postscript* is powerful. Dan and I want to commend the writers and Editors-in-Chief for the brave work they did around this difficult topic. It was not easy for the students to put their stories out there and we honor them for articulating their concerns. We also honor and support a free student press. Park prides itself on student voices having a forum to be heard without administrative filters. We believe students should bring difficult issues to the community and ask how we are addressing them. We want to assure you, here, that we are tackling the concerns brought by our students.

Part of Park's culture is a constant mode of examination, reflection, and action. In this case, we are being called to action on imbalanced experiences based on gender. We, the teaching professionals here at Park, must examine the ways that any of us experience privilege — whether it be through gender, race, class, or another factor — and seek to question our assumptions, and further our understanding of the rights and needs of others. In the coming weeks, we will be having more conversations about the issue of sexism with faculty and staff, and with our students.

With that said, we also want to be clear that when we become aware of a specific concern about any member of our community crossing boundaries, whether intentionally or unintentionally, it is our commitment to address the matter directly with the person(s) involved. And when the concerns raised suggest a broader problem, a comprehensive response is required. To that end, the entire faculty will address the notions of boundary-crossing and constructive feedback in upcoming professional development meetings, with the expectation that we take actionable steps to fulfill our ongoing mission to create the most effective learning environment possible for every Park student.

The matters raised at the Senior Girls' Lunch and the subsequent discussion, raised in *Postscript*, remind us that students place their trust in the adults at Park. That trust must be honored and vigilantly protected. We have to look beyond our best intentions as adults and always seek to understand how our actions affect our students. We have power in our classrooms as we give assessments, assign grades, maintain academic records, and interact with our students. We have an obligation to conduct ourselves professionally and to respond to feedback.

In the Editorial, the writers tell us that it is their responsibility to be students: to study, attend clubs and classes, play sports, and make art. *Yes, it is*. And it is the responsibility of the adults to maintain a safe environment where students can learn and grow without distraction. We have important work ahead of us.

Sincerely,

Patti Porcarelli
Upper School Principal

Dan Paradis
Head of School