



GIVE & TAKE

By Bridget Curtis '08

Adjunct Professor Holly Neibauer knows the importance of giving back. Apart from her enthusiasm in the classroom, Neibauer is also a dedicated mother to her daughter, Robyn, who was diagnosed with autism at a young age. Now, with the help of a former student, she is bringing new meaning to the idea that to give a little, you gotta take a little, too.

“Arcadia equals home,” says **Holly Neibauer '99, '01M**. She was named Arcadia’s 2007 Adjunct Faculty Award recipient for the incredible amount she gives to the students she teaches, but she has found that what students and alumni give back can make all the difference in the world.

Identified by one of the many students nominating her for the award as “the most passionate, student-centered teacher I have ever met,” Neibauer began teaching English at Arcadia—where she earned both her undergraduate and graduate degrees—in 1999. “I won the English Department award when I was a senior and, on graduation day, my department chair asked me to come in for an interview,” she recalls. Another nominator wrote, “Holly works extremely hard on everything she pursues, always gives 100 percent, and somehow still finds time to come up with new and wonderful ideas.”

One of those wonderful ideas is the popular Knight Star charity event. “Knight Star began as an Honors Thought and Expression II final project in 2006,” says Neibauer. Originally called “Arcadia Idol,” Knight Star is similar to the hit show *American Idol*. Students perform, are critiqued by animated judges, and one is eventually named the Knight Star. But Knight Star has another important purpose. “After the first year was so successful (and fun!), a handful of the students came to me and asked if we could do it again, and I jumped at the chance,” says Neibauer. “We ended up raising nearly three times the amount we raised the first time.”

The 2007 charity recipient was Autism Speaks, an organization that is close to Neibauer’s heart. Her 5-year old daughter, Robyn, was diagnosed with the disorder just after her second birthday.

“When I first heard the diagnosis, I believed that autism should really be spelled ‘oughtism’ because it was all about what my daughter ought to be doing, but now I feel differently,” she says. “I realize that part of my daughter’s beauty is her autism, and learning so much about this disorder has made me a much more loving, sensitive person who is much better with children than ever before.” Neibauer works with autistic children under the age of 3. “I do Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy with them, and it’s one of the most challenging and rewarding things I’ve ever done.”

But it was her daughter’s therapist who reminded Neibauer that those who give can also receive. At Elwyn’s H.E.A.R.T program, Neibauer was happy to see one of her former students, **Diana Discher '05**. “Having Diana work with Robyn has provided a real ‘full circle’ moment for me,” says Neibauer. “Where I once was Diana’s teacher, she is now Robyn’s (and an amazing one at that). It’s a real gift to be able to take pride not only in Robyn’s achievements, but also in Diana as a graduate of Arcadia. Her education has in turn rewarded my family with a professional, well-trained, highly effective therapist who has



Holly Neibauer helps her daughter, Robyn, across the balance beam as her therapist, Diana Discher '05 watches the progress.

gained my lifelong gratitude and respect. We owe many of Robyn’s developmental achievements to her, not the least of which is conversational speech, which is sometimes an unattainable goal for some children with autism.

“I think my experience is a great example of the Arcadia Promise,” continues Neibauer. “As a student, the school really offered me the world because my education went beyond the academics. I learned how to teach, how to reach students, and I’ve certainly put those lessons to use.” Now, as a benefactor of that same Promise, Neibauer is able to return the favor and offer the same things to her students. “I wholeheartedly believe in our Promise, I take pride in it, and I am honored to be a part of those who help students learn what it means to them personally. ■

DISCOVERING ANCIENT HISTORY IN GREECE

By Bridget Curtis '08

Greece, the birthplace of democracy, philosophy, literature and drama, not to mention the Olympic games, has a long and eventful history; one that has greatly influenced all of Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. The country's rich culture and heritage make it an ideal subject for study, which is exactly what Honor students from Arcadia had the opportunity to do when they visited Greece over the winter break 2007.

During the trip, students such as **Caitlin Bjellquist '09**, had the opportunity to explore both ancient and modern Greece, as they co-exist together today. Athens, one of the oldest cities in the world, is home to ancient wonders such as the Acropolis

and the Parthenon. It is also a bustling and cosmopolitan metropolis where current Greek economic, financial, industrial, cultural and political lives converge. The students also visited the ancient cities of Corinth and Delphi.

For Bjellquist, who is writing her final paper on Hellenistic Greek Sculpture, the Greek experience was invaluable. Not only was she able to see the sites firsthand, but the people she met there influenced her decision to continue studying Greek art history at a post-graduate level. "I traveled halfway around the world to meet a woman who has proven invaluable in the world of networking, both for my future and my present. It was one of the most amazing experiences of my life!"

"My trip to Greece helped me to experience the Arcadia Promise by giving me the chance to experience different cultures while learning course material by walking through ancient ruins and having them reconstructed in my mind by the amazing descriptions of archeologists from the Arcadia center in Athens," says Honors student **Shera Wack '07**.

"Not only did I get to learn more about modern Greek culture, I got to experience the absolute respect that the Greek people hold for their past. I saw this in many ways, through the Athens metro program, preservation of ancient areas such as Tyriens and Mycene, as well as the ways that the Greek society is run with the respect still given to small family farms. I was surprised to see how much of a culture of respect exists in such a modern city. It was great to see the beautiful modern metro stations with ancient artifacts proudly displayed for all to learn from." ■

Pictured from Left: Dawn Minchin, Shera Wack, Jennifer Zellers and Jess Parisi.





GETTING CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

By Michelle Tooker '07

In its 12th year, the Student Teaching Abroad Experience is fulfilling not one, but all three components of Arcadia's Promise. The program offers undergraduate and graduate students a chance to teach overseas in either Canterbury or London, England. For five to seven weeks, participating Education majors enjoy a global, integrative and personal learning experience.

Students get a global perspective from key differences in London's extremely diverse classrooms. "It was interesting to see the cultural differences and how everyone mixes together," agrees **Amy Jacobsen '07**, who taught in London. She found the assortment of cultures

and languages fascinating, adding, "Experiencing that was amazing."

"The experience broadens students' view of education in general," says **Kathy Trainor**, Arcadia's Student Teaching Supervisor. Participants better understand education in their own society through comparison.

"Employers know that these students have a broader understanding of curriculum and educational delivery," says **Jane Duffy**, Director of the Office of Student Teaching and Supervision. "Graduates who have taught abroad are more employable and desirable to potential employers."

The student teachers also found a way to incorporate hands-on integrative learning into their classrooms. They connected classroom projects in the United States with those in England. In Canterbury, **Deanna Blouch '07** created a project using "Flat Stanley"—the main character from Jeff Brown's children's book of the same name. Her American and British students traded pictures of Stanley at places they thought the children in the other country should see.

Jacobsen implemented a pen pal system between her students in London and Bensalem, Pa. Students from both classrooms created letters that explained what life is like in a rural, suburban or urban setting. "The kids in Bensalem were excited about the letters," says Jacobsen. "It was good to see how excited and interested they were in my trip."

As for personal attention, all participants are given an orientation and debriefing upon their arrival and departure from England. Throughout the course of the program, the teachers are in contact with Trainor, Duffy and local British supervisors.

Questions and concerns are never ignored or left unanswered. ■