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connections

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Learning TOgEtHeR

A remarkable array of educational partnerships in 'the learning city'

In Cambridge – “the learning city” – the pursuit of excellence in teaching and learning is common ground for many, including Harvard University and the Cambridge Public Schools.

In fact, Harvard and the Cambridge Public Schools are bound together not only by proximity but also through a strong web of learning collaborations.

These Harvard-Cambridge connections link Harvard schools, departments, professors and students, with teachers and students, principals and administrators at every grade level and in every public school in Cambridge. “There is a wide range of programs we are involved in with Harvard that are really integrated with the idea of living in a learning culture,” says Cambridge Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Thomas Fowler-Finn.

“The programs are involved right down to the classroom level and also encourage all of us in learning about how we can develop better teaching skills.”

Some programs, like CIVICS, are initiated by Harvard students. Other programs, like the Cambridge-Harvard Summer Academy, were formed by Harvard faculty working with school leaders to improve teaching and learning.

In the case of the Academy, over the past five years Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) student teachers have helped more than 1,250 Cambridge high school students in grades 8-12 master course material

that both helps them to meet graduation requirements and to get a head-start on further education.

The Harvard Museum of Natural History (HMNH) science outreach programs to date have linked thousands of Cambridge public school students and their teachers with the museum’s archives and experts.

Still other collaborations tap Harvard educational experts. For example, HGSE Professor Richard Elmore has provided professional development assistance to more than 30 Cambridge Public Schools principals and senior administrators this year, and early childhood expert Dr. Catherine Snow is working closely with nearby elementary schools. Both have introduced new ways of approaching teaching and learning that are being integrated in real time in Cambridge schools.

“We have been able to advance our thinking as a school system and a learning community by having the best ideas and maximizing the possibilities for children through our work with Harvard,” says Fowler-Finn, who adds that one good example of this relationship is the ability for educators to pick up the phone and just ask an expert.

“Harvard University has a unique relationship with the Cambridge Public Schools,” adds Kathleen McCartney, recently appointed dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. “We are partners in a community of learning that spans the generations – from the young child enrolled in Harvard’s childcare centers, to the doctoral students conducting research on issues ranging from natural resources to school success, to older Cantabrigians taking classes at Harvard’s Extension School. This partnership brings together researchers, practitioners, and policymakers in an effort to improve the lives of children. In this effort, we will only succeed if we all work together.”

“Cambridge is a special place,” says Mayor Kenneth Reeves. “Nowhere else will you find such a diverse concentration of people working to learn more, to learn better, and help each other and society in the process.”

In the pages that follow, we invite you to read more about the educational connections that are strengthening

Dear Readers:

The Cambridge Public Schools have a long and storied history of producing thousands of high achieving alumni, including Nobel Prize-winning physicists, Rhodes Scholars, Olympic gold medal-winning athletes, and Academy Award-winning actors and screenwriters. Last year, roughly 92 percent of our graduates went on to colleges, universities, or technical schools, including 11 who were accepted by Harvard University.

This year, a record-high 98.5 percent of our seniors passed the MCAS exam, a dramatic improvement from just three years ago, when only 80 percent of seniors passed.

Our SAT scores have seen a similarly dramatic increase, to record highs in both the verbal and math sections of the test.

These extraordinary results are due, in large part, to the quality of our teaching and administrative staff.

We have become more focused in curriculum, more personalized in how we help each and every student succeed, and more directed in our professional development through the work we are doing with Harvard faculty in teaching principals and senior administrators how to identify best teaching practices.

We’re living in a learning city and elevating our expectations for what we can do as a school system for children.

Dr. Thomas Fowler-Finn
Superintendent
Cambridge Public Schools

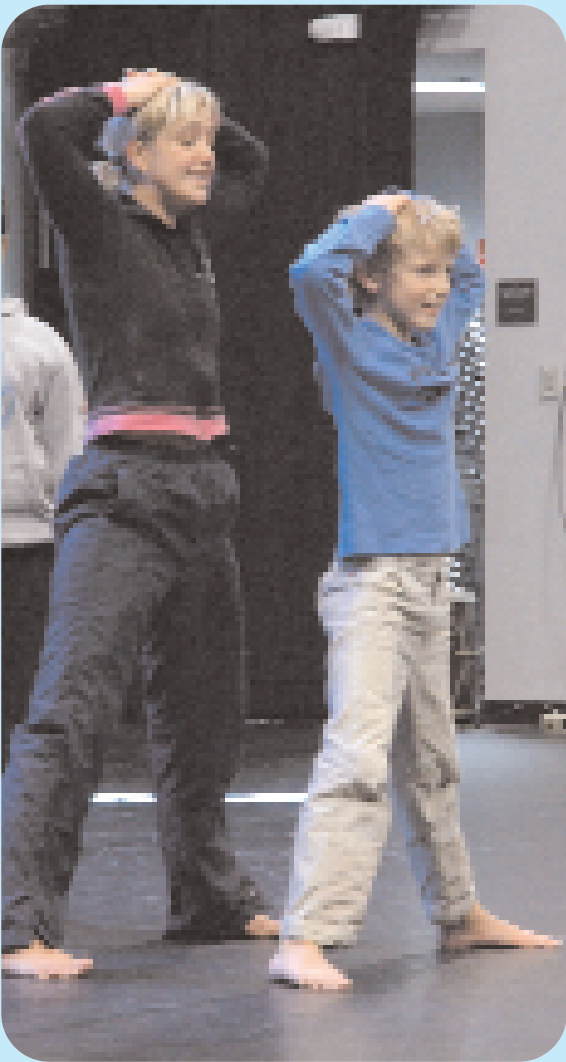
“Cambridge is a special place. Nowhere else will you find such a diverse concentration of people working to learn more, to learn better, and help each other and society in the process.”

— Mayor Kenneth Reeves

“To dance is to live & to live is to dance”

- Liz Bergmann, Director of Dance,
Harvard University

LIVING AND DANCING TOGETHER: This spring, Harvard launched a dance pilot program linking the Harvard Dance Program and nearby Graham and Parks Alternative School. Each week, third- and fourth- graders from the school walked to the new Harvard Dance Center for “Exploring Dance,” a class taught by Harvard Dance Program instructor Jodi Allen. The class touched on the basics of dance, including creative dance, West African dance, jazz dance, hip hop, modern dance and ballet. “We are excited to celebrate dance in many forms with our young neighbors,” says Liz Bergmann, director of dance, whose motto is “To dance is to live and to live is to dance.”



Julie Russell/Harvard University Community Affairs



Julie Russell/Harvard University Community Affairs

Julie Vallimont, education specialist, shows a chuckwalla to students at the Haggerty School in Cambridge as part of the discovery classes for kindergarten through second grade students at the Harvard Museum of Natural History.

Students, teachers study natural world at Harvard Museum of Natural History

By Peg LeGendre, K-6 Science Mentor Teacher

What do a mammoth’s tooth, a live opossum, and raptor eggshells have in common? Students from the Cambridge Public Schools use these and other artifacts from the extraordinary collections of the Harvard Museum of Natural History in hands-on explorations of science each year.

Since 2001, the Harvard Museum of Natural History (HMNH) and the Cambridge Public Schools Science Department have had a working partnership, made possible with generous support and funding provided by Harvard University.

The goal of this partnership is to use the unique resources of the HMNH to create exciting, high quality life, earth and anthropology science programs that enhance the Cambridge Public Schools science curriculum and excite students about science. A secondary goal is to help students develop a greater respect for and understanding of the natural world and our place in it.

The partnership supports student visits to the museum for discovery classes and lab workshops that have been cooperatively developed between HMNH personnel and Cambridge teachers. As a result, Cambridge student participation in the classes and labs at HMNH have increased from around 900 at the start of the collaboration to more than 2,300 student visits per year today. In addition, more than 500 students and teachers have participated in self-guided visits to the museum.

Another innovation is an internship program for students at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, where high

school students are trained as exhibit “Discovery Guides” for groups of children from local afterschool programs visiting the museum. In exchange for their service, the students earn high school credit.

The partnership also supports professional development of Cambridge teachers. More than a dozen teacher workshops have been held on topics such as mineralogy, paleontology, animal classification, and biodiversity.

HMNH staff visited the Maynard Ecology Center, the environmental educational facility for the Cambridge Public Schools Science Department, to offer aquatic biology workshops focusing on Black’s Nook Pond.

And more than 30 teachers have participated in new HMNH courses designed specifically for Cambridge, including “Life on Earth: Diversity and Adaptation” and “Unearthing the Secrets of Our Geologic Past.”

Parent outreach is another focus of our collaboration. HMNH staff have made special presentations at Family Science Nights held at Cambridge schools, and participated in Science in the City, a city-wide science event held last October. HMNH also developed its own annual Family Night, offering free admission and an evening of special activities for Cambridge families. This year, more than 350 Cambridge students and their families enjoyed special events such as using specimens from the HMNH collections to solve science mysteries.

By working together, the Cambridge Public Schools and the HMNH have succeeding in making science education both “hands on” and “minds on.” •

Amigos School students explore Art Museums year-round

“I see a bird and clouds and lots of colors,” says Tony, pointing out the elements he sees in a Lyonel Feininger painting hanging in the Fogg Art Museum.

This isn’t Tony’s first time analyzing art at the Fogg. And it isn’t the first time for his 30 classmates from the Amigos Elementary School in Cambridge, either.

All of the bilingual school’s third-graders have been attending a year-long outreach program sponsored by the Harvard University Art Museums (HUAM) focusing on cultural literacy – and much more.

Started seven years ago, the arts collaboration hosts all Amigos, as well as Kennedy-Longfellow, third-graders for a monthly visit, which begins with an introduction to the Fogg via a tour from the the basement to the top floor.

Students progress to studying four artists and a period of art history. Amigos students have been studying the Renaissance period along with works by painters as various as Rembrandt, Van Gogh, Max Beckmann, and Picasso.

The students gain “an ease with being in a museum, and the idea that they can come into this place and feel

as confident as they might when they go to a library,” says Lynne Stanton, coordinator of Public Education at the Harvard University Art Museums.

On one visit to the museum, the Amigos students listen intently to their docent, Carolyn Woollen-Tucker, as she points out shades of color and asks them what in the paintings elicits strong thoughts and feelings.

Later, Woollen-Tucker asks the kids to draw a sculpture in the sketchbooks provided to them by HUAM, explaining that the exercise is meant to teach them that “you have to really look at things closely to learn.”

Back in the classroom, teachers follow up on what the children have been doing and seeing at the museum by showing them reproductions of the artwork and making assignments that reinforce lessons about the artists.

“We really cherish this relationship with the museum,” says Marcia Pertuz, a Harvard Graduate School of Education graduate and teacher at the Amigos School for the past 12 years, who adds, “The experience teaches them that art is for all – all classes, all people, and all languages.” •



Kris Stribbe/Harvard News Office

Tirsa Rebecca Bonilla, a third-grader from the Amigos School in Cambridge who is part of the art exploration program, reacts to David Smith’s “Detroit Queen” sculpture with her own drawing at the Fogg Art Museum.

“The experience teaches them that art is for all – all classes, all people, and all languages.”

— Amigos School teacher Marcia Pertuz

Cambridge Harvard Summer Academy boosts summer learning for all

By Zeke Phillips, Harvard Teacher Education Program Master's Degree Student

This June 29th marks the sixth summer that Cambridge Rindge and Latin becomes home to the Cambridge Harvard Summer Academy (CHSA), a six-week summer school program for students from Cambridge.

Run by both Cambridge Rindge and Latin and the Teacher Education Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and funded by Harvard University, CHSA “provides a terrific partnership between Cambridge and Harvard that represents a win-win for both,” says Dr. Katherine K. Merseth, director of the Teacher Education Program.

Class periods are two hours long. Courses – offered in math, science, English and history – are taught by as many as five teachers and no fewer than three, giving students individualized attention.

All this happens before 1 p.m. each day, which leaves



Kiki Auguste, Harvard Cambridge Summer Academy student, gives a presentation about Emmett Till at the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School.

the afternoon open for employment or additional summer activities. And, it's free of charge.

“It really is a fabulous opportunity,” says Merseth, “with both sides doing what neither could do alone.”

“For Harvard, it allows us in the Teacher Education Program to enable beginning teachers a taste of reality by teaching for six weeks, on teams, during the summer,” adds Merseth.

“For Cambridge, it offers an intensive learning opportunity for youngsters who want to review important skills. And for mentor teachers, it is a brief opportunity to study the art of teaching and to explore ways to share their knowledge of the profession with those entering the profession.”

Much is done over these six weeks by students and teachers alike.

Teaching teams, led by experienced mentor teachers, plan and teach curriculum for courses ranging from physics to history, algebra to chemistry, biology to American literature, and spend structured time reflecting on their teaching practices. Students attend one to two classes each day for either course credit or academic enrichment.

And this summer, students will have even more choices, says CHSA Harvard Director Sara Suchman, since the program is expanding, offering three-week sessions in addition to the traditional six-week program, and adding new courses like “Prep for Algebra II,” “Prep for Pre-Calculus” and one English and one history elective.

“The hope is that this meets the needs of the students better,” says Suchman.

“Students who couldn't commit their whole summer to this sort of leg up might be able and willing to commit three weeks.”

“The program has a small student-to-teacher ratio,” says CHSA Principal Jamalh Prince, “which allows a lot of small learning communities, a lot of immediate atten-

CHSA “provides a terrific partnership between Cambridge and Harvard that represents a win-win for both.”

– Dr. Katherine K. Merseth, Director of the Teacher Education Program



Fun with Reading Buddies

A collaboration between the Office of School Partnerships at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and Cambridge School Volunteers Inc., the HGSE Reading Buddies program places student, staff, and faculty volunteers from across Harvard in a one-on-one setting with Amigos School second-graders to read aloud and discuss books every other Tuesday.

Photo Diane Covert

tion. That's what I'm most excited about seeing [this summer] – I think people will be able to grow in that environment.”

“I love the model,” says Laura Mosman, a CRLS English teacher and CHSA mentor. “I think if all kids were able to learn that way, it would really be better for so many kids, because I've seen it be successful for so many kids who haven't normally had success during the school year.”

Meanwhile, the program's effects are lasting. “When these kids arrive back in the fall, they're that much better prepared. They are better able to contribute to the community, both academically and socially,” says Prince.

Adds Suchman, “Learning done well and teaching done well are really fabulous things, and there's no need to stop them during the summer.” •

CIVICS volunteers, CPS students learn about politics

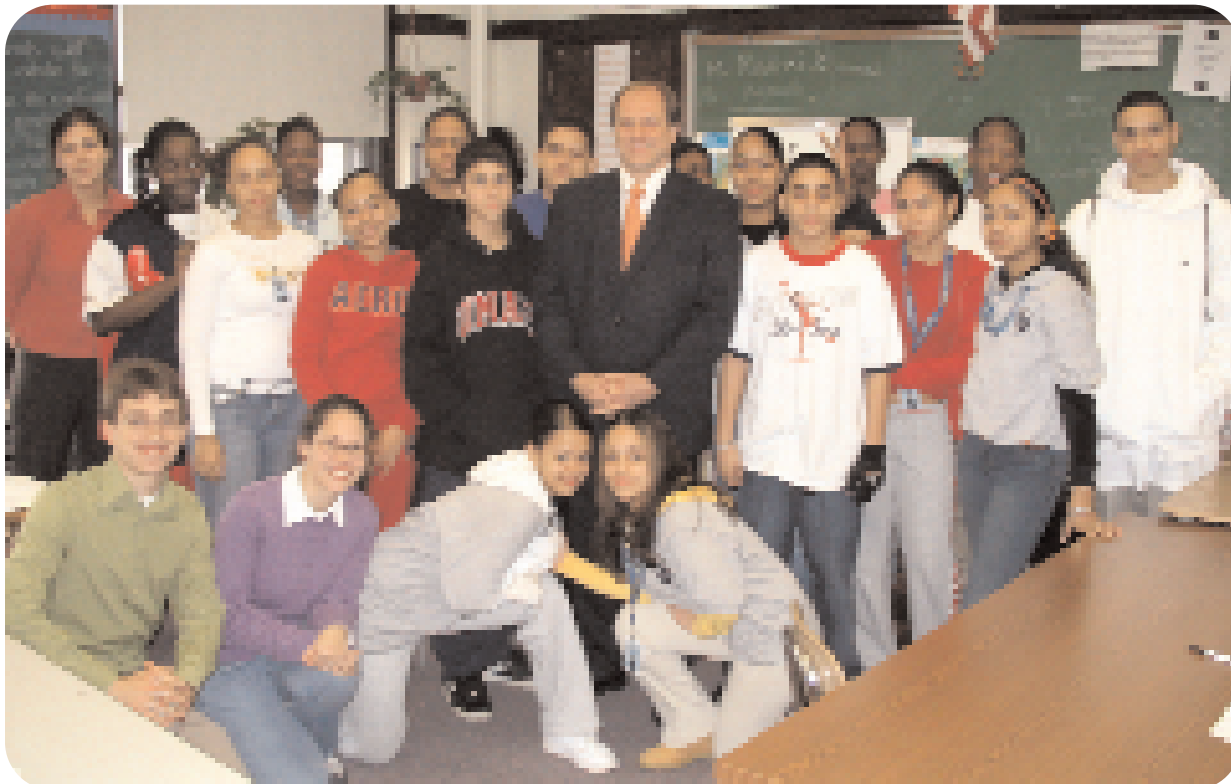
By Alan Tabak, Co-Chair, CIVICS Program

The goal of CIVICS, an in-school teaching program co-sponsored by Harvard's Institute of Politics and the Phillips Brooks House Association, is not only to teach local public school students the factual information they will need to pass tests, but also to inspire students to vote and become active members of their communities.

These goals are accomplished through teams of Harvard undergraduate volunteers who visit Boston and Cambridge elementary and middle schools to teach students about the structure of American government and students' rights and responsibilities as citizens through interactive lessons.

For more than a decade, CIVICS has offered local public schools a special blend of politics and community service. Today, Harvard students are teaching in nine nearby classrooms, including a seventh-grade class at Kennedy-Longfellow and a fifth-grade class at the Baldwin School.

Although volunteers teach the students themselves,



CIVICS regularly brings important political figures into the classroom, including U.S. Congressman Michael Capuano, who answered questions from a class of eighth-grade constituents.

they are also able to provide students with special opportunities.

For example, each semester many IOP Fellows visit students' classrooms, such as former Senator Bob Graham and chief political correspondent for The New York Times Adam Nagourney, who visited this semester. CIVICS also arranged a classroom visit with U.S.

Congressman Michael Capuano, who represents the students and their families in Washington, D.C., and an assembly led by former New Hampshire Governor and current IOP Director Jeanne Shaheen.

CIVICS also regularly plans end-of-the-year projects for students, such as trips to the Kennedy Library in Boston. •

Harvard faculty, Cambridge principals work to define quality teaching and learning

By Justin T. Martin, Cambridge Public Schools

This fall the Cambridge Public Schools and Harvard University paired up to help local principals develop a common definition of quality teaching and learning through the innovative new Instructional Leadership Improvement Program.



The program taps Dr. Richard F. Elmore of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, a renowned expert in instruction and school improvement.

“This is an extraordinary opportunity for principals and other school leaders to develop a new set of skills and competencies,” said Dr. Thomas Fowler-Finn, superintendent of the Cambridge Public Schools. “This has been a tremendous opportunity for us. These new skills are helping the principals become better principals and, in turn, helping the teachers become better teachers.”

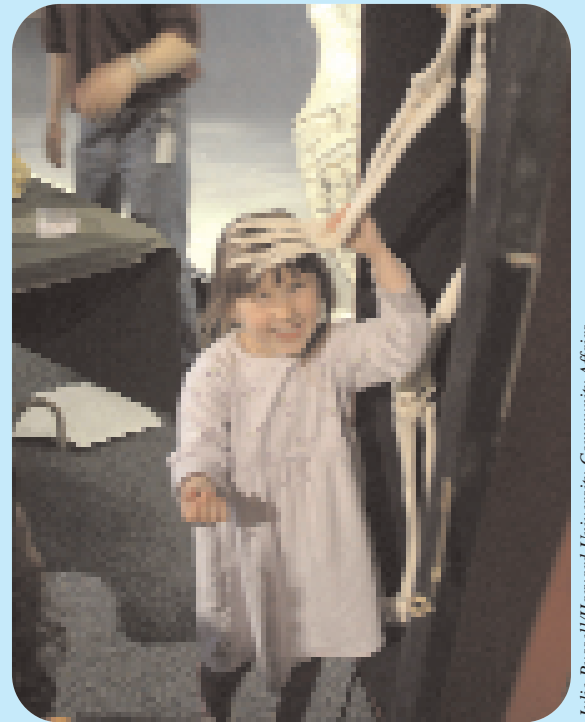
Dr. Elmore, the Gregory Anrig Professor of Educational Leadership at Harvard, has led groups of administrators, including the superintendent and the central office staff, on visits to different Cambridge elementary schools and the high school each month.

During school visits, the group of 30 Cambridge Public Schools administrators take note of techniques that can be replicated throughout the system.

“Essentially, we’re not looking at teachers, but teaching practices,” said Dr. Carolyn Turk, Cambridge’s deputy superintendent for teaching and learning.

“This is a way for principals to understand and develop a common baseline of what high quality teaching and learning really are.” •

HMNH hosts Cambridge Family Science Night



Julie Russell/Harvard University Community Affairs

Three-year-old Anya Cunningham from the Morse School in Cambridge greets a skeleton in Dinosaur Hall. Nearly 350 Cambridge parents and their children learned how fun science could be at the Harvard Museum of Natural History’s Cambridge Family Science Night.

Having fun while learning after school

Learning Support Program helps Cambridge kids to learn math, strategic thinking

Math homework is not one of 10-year-old Aubrey Cappucci’s favorite things, but at The East End House after-school program in her East Cambridge neighborhood, she’s found a way to learn about math and love it – through games.

Aubrey is just one of hundreds of Cambridge children who are benefiting from the Learning Support Program that supports after-school programs in the Boston area. These programs received a weighty kit of dozens of games and other learning resources, on-site training and ongoing sup-

port from the Learning Support Program team for each center’s directors, teachers, and volunteers, and guides for using the materials effectively.

From Central Cambridge to Riverside to East Cambridge, games in the learning support kit are being tapped regularly by teachers as a way to encourage strategic thinking and enrich math learning, and are enthusiastically welcomed by students, who just like to play. Games help children to build their vocabularies during homework help time, and reference materials like fraction flash cards and

other tools are a handy accessory to have when math homework gets tough.

“This has absolutely changed the way we are teaching in our classrooms. Our children have never been so focused,” says Sarah Link ’01, HGSE ’04, East End House’s director of out-of-school time initiatives. “We are trying to bridge a gap,” adds Charles Walker, director of Area Four Youth Center, which serves 60 children in the Central Square area. “These games help by offering a hands-on way to create some of the learning not taking place in the classroom.” •

Summer Learning Opportunities at Harvard



Fogg Art Museum
32 Quincy Street, 617-495-9400
<http://www.artmuseums.harvard.edu/fogg>

Arthur M. Sackler Museum
485 Broadway, 617-495-9400
<http://www.artmuseums.harvard.edu/sackler>

Busch-Reisinger Museum
32 Quincy Street, 617-495-9400
<http://www.artmuseums.harvard.edu/busch>

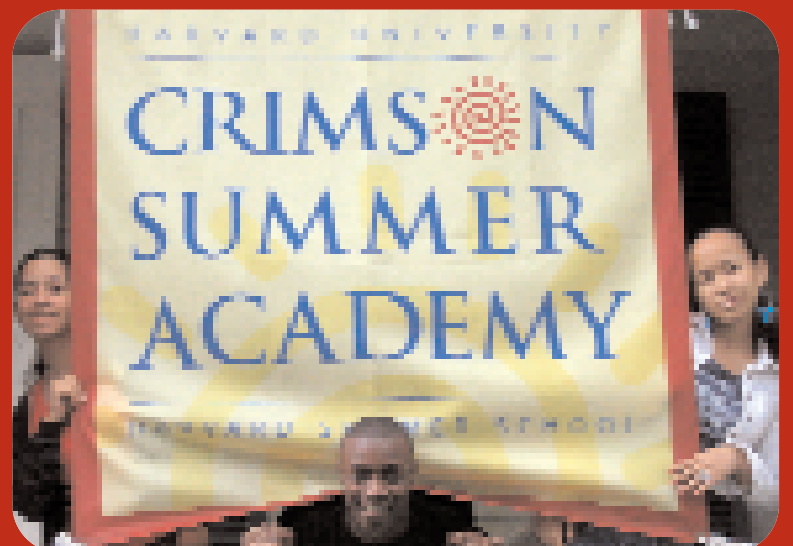
Harvard Museum of Natural History
26 Oxford Street, 617-495-3045
<http://www.hmnh.harvard.edu/>

Peabody Museum
11 Divinity Avenue, 617-496-1027
<http://www.peabody.harvard.edu/>

Semitic Museum
6 Divinity Avenue, 617-495-4631
<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/semitic>

Crimson Summer

Thirty students from Cambridge high schools, 20 from Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, will take classes on Harvard’s campus this summer during the Crimson Summer Academy, Harvard’s academic enrichment program for talented low-income youth from Cambridge and Boston. As Crimson Scholars, the students take part in a stimulating mix of science and technology, quantitative reasoning and writing classes, academic projects, field trips and extracurricular activities aimed at preparing them for the rigors of college.



Peter Axante-Gyimah

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