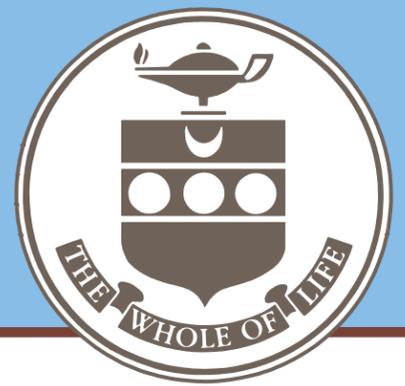


# GOOD NEWS

## GIFTS & GRATITUDE



## BLAUVELT THEATRE RENOVATION PROJECT: *We Heard You. We're Doing It. Now Join Us.*

At the winter State of the School address to the Friends Select School community, head of school Michael Gary announced plans to fully renovate the Blauvelt Theatre. Efforts are underway to raise nearly \$2 million for the project so that work can begin promptly at the conclusion of the 2016-17 academic year. Construction will take place throughout the summer so that work will be complete by late fall 2017.

The much-needed improvements and updates will include a larger stage, improved sight lines for the lower level and balcony seating, an enhanced audio visual system and better acoustics, and new theater chairs. Additionally, the Blauvelt Theatre will be equipped to video record and live stream assemblies, performances, and speakers. Head of school Michael Gary states: "After serving the community in so many ways for so long, the Blauvelt Theatre is in need of, and certainly deserving of, renovations. But we need your help. We are going to lead moving forward with the renovation of the Blauvelt Theatre trusting we can rely on the community to follow in supporting the project."

From an aesthetic perspective, it is important for this space to be as attractive as the school's most recent facility updates, such as the Lower Level and Fitness Center. As it is located at the front entrance to the school, the Blauvelt Theatre is in a high-traffic area and frequently the first stop on building tours and Admission Department interviews. Anita Bailey, Director of Middle/Upper School and International Admission, shares, "All parents, even those who have children who haven't shown an interest in the performing arts, often look for and comment on the need for a strong arts program in an academic institution that serves children in



FSS Blauvelt Theatre proposed view from the side. Updates will include a larger stage area, new seating, and a state-of-the-art audio visual system.

grades pre-K through 12th grade. Having a modern and up to date theater is one way Friends Select shows its commitment to nurturing and developing each child, in and outside of the classroom."

The Blauvelt Theatre has hosted countless events since it was first completed in 1969: its stage has hosted more than 200 authors in the span of 10 years; it was the site of the announcement of the largest gift to the school in FSS history; and it's been the site of celebrations for student achievements, faculty and staff accolades, and distinguished alumni/ae. But, in more than 40 years, it has received only minor updates. Its seats are uncomfortable and squeak with the slightest movement, the lighting and audio visual system is outdated, and the stage's size is limiting with the increases in class size and elaborate student productions.

*"We are going to lead moving forward with the renovation of the Blauvelt Theatre trusting we can rely on the community to follow in supporting the project."*

MICHAEL GARY

It's finally time for the Blauvelt Theatre to receive the renovations it deserves. To support the project contact Christine Jefferson, Director of Development and Alumni/ae Relations, at 215.561.5900, extension 141, or at [chrisj@friends-select.org](mailto:chrisj@friends-select.org).



## THE ABRAMS-BARRY FAMILY CREATES A CHALLENGE MATCH

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The announcement of the Blauvelt Theatre renovation project was shared with news of a significant gift of \$100,000 from the parents of Friends Select School alums Ben Abrams '15 and Martha Abrams '16. Now, FSS families and friends have an opportunity to expand on that gift.

The Blauvelt Theatre is a special place for Margaret Barry and Jeff Abrams. Ben and Martha, both talented performers, had the opportunity to work together on Friends Select's production of *RENT* in 2013, Ben as a starring cast member and Martha as drummer in the *RENT* stage band. One year later, Ben – who, at graduation, was awarded the 2015 Jonathan R. Levine '73 Performing Arts Award with castmate Angela Bey '15 – performed the title role in *Pippin*.

In appreciation of Friends Select's ongoing commitment to excellence in the performing arts, Jeff and Margaret have leveraged an additional gift for the Blauvelt Theatre renovation with a challenge match: the Abrams-Barry family will match every dollar donated in honor of the Classes of 2015 and 2016, up to an additional \$25,000. In turn, the theater's new vestibule will be named in tribute to those graduating classes. Like so many in the Friends Select community, Jeff and



Ben Abrams '15, center, and his classmates received praise for their interpretation of *RENT*. Ben's sister, Martha '16, was the percussionist for the accompanying music.

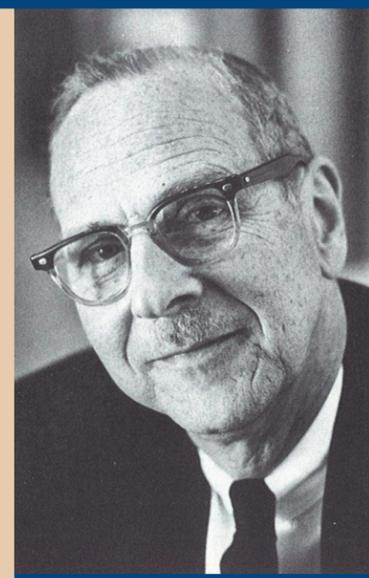
Margaret feel the modern rebirth of FSS musical theater was kicked off by *RENT* and *Pippin*; both shows were anchored by members of the '15 and '16 classes, and produced the first-ever Friends Select winners of the prestigious Greater Philadelphia Cappies Awards: Angela Bey '15 and Emily Augenbraun '16, along with Cappies nominees Abby Kring '14, Clara Hughes '14, Chris Keppel '15, and Donnay Burden '15. More importantly, those productions ushered in a new era of innovation, ambition, and creative risk-taking that will challenge and inspire Friends Select's performers, choreographers, designers, technicians, and mentors for generations to come.

Challenge matches are a way for existing donors to further help support Friends Select School. By adding another layer to their giving that focuses on motivating and inspiring others, challenge matches not only generate more gifts but also turn potential donors into firm supporters.

Friends Select School is grateful for the support and loyalty of the Abrams-Barry family for this and so many other programs they have helped make possible. For questions about supporting the Abrams-Barry challenge match, or about other ways to give to the school, contact Christine Jefferson, Director of Development and Alumni/ae Relations, at 215.561.5900, extension 141, or [chrisj@friends-select.org](mailto:chrisj@friends-select.org).

The Blauvelt Theatre is named in honor of Master G. Laurence "Larry" Blauvelt and his service to Friends Select School. Master Larry served as head of school from 1955 to 1975 and was instrumental in the construction of the current school building nearly 50 years ago.

Larry Blauvelt is revered by the alumni/ae and teachers who had the pleasure of knowing him, and his legacy is celebrated in Friends Select's history. During his tenure, he is credited with increasing enrollment, instituting science labs, and elevating Friends Select's academic standards. He is remembered as an exceptional leader and teacher, and is truly responsible for the school's place and prominence at 17th and the Parkway.



## Raise THE Curtain

on

## Blauvelt Theatre

Nik Greenblatt P'25, '27 and his firm, [Zone5 Creative], produced a film, *Raise the Curtain on the Blauvelt Theatre*, to accompany the *Make a Difference* component of the annual PA auction. To see the video, check out Friends Select's Vimeo page.

A publication of the FSS Development and Alumni/ae Relations Office.  
 Casey Beck, *editor*  
 Photos courtesy of Brice Goldberg D'Amico Studios  
 Graphics by Atkin Olshin Schade Architects, Zone5 Creative, Tina Dougherty.

Parents bid on several exciting live auction items, including trips, theater tickets, and dinner with the Garys. Support for the *Make a Difference* component was overwhelming: parents raised more than \$15,000 for the Blauvelt Theatre's video recording and live streaming equipment.



## BLAUVELT THEATRE RENOVATION PROJECT NAMING OPPORTUNITIES

Friends Select School is pleased to offer naming opportunities for those who would like to establish a permanent legacy in the Blauvelt Theatre. Below is a list of leadership gift levels available to enable individuals, families, and graduating classes to honor their Friends Select experience.

Center for the Arts	\$2,000,000
Stage	\$750,000
Balcony	\$500,000
Lighting	\$250,000
Sound & Audio Visual Room	\$100,000
Select Rows of Seating in Theater	\$50,000 - \$25,000

Additionally, read about the Blauvelt Theatre "Fill the House" campaign, below; for \$5,000 or more, donors have the opportunity to name a theater chair in honor of a friend or loved one, favorite former teacher, classmate, class year, Friends Select memory, or can even reference a special quote or saying.

For more information on how to make a gift to support the Blauvelt Theatre renovation project and naming opportunities, contact Christine Jefferson, Director of Development and Alumni/ae Relations, at 215.561.5600, extension 141, or [chrisj@friends-select.org](mailto:chrisj@friends-select.org).

## HELP FRIENDS SELECT SCHOOL "FILL THE HOUSE" – SPONSOR A NEW THEATER CHAIR

Become an integral part of the Blauvelt Theatre renovation project by participating in the

"Fill the House" campaign. Your tax-deductible gift will not only support efforts to improve the physical space where students, faculty, alumni/ae, and parents gather, it also provides an opportunity to leave your legacy or honor a friend or loved one for years to come.



FSS Blauvelt Theatre proposed view from balcony featuring new seating.

### ■ \$5,000 SEAT SPONSOR

- Includes donor plate personalization on a chair; donor plaque recognition in the theater; recognition in the annual report of gifts and at the "opening night celebration" for donors.
- Examples of seat naming include: in honor of a friend or loved one, to recognize a graduating class, or to share a special quote or memory. **Seats may not be named after current teachers or students.**
- Donor plates are 7/8" x 2-1/2" and are placed in an aisle arm recess. Suggested character limitations: Three lines of three to five words per line.

### ■ \$2,500 PATRON SPONSOR

- Includes recognition on donor plaque in theater, in annual report of gifts, and at the "opening night celebration" for donors.

### ■ \$1,000 CAST SPONSOR

- Includes recognition on donor plaque in theater and in annual report of gifts.

### ■ \$500 ORCHESTRA SPONSOR

- Includes recognition in annual report of gifts.

For more information, or to help "Fill the House," use the included donor envelope or contact Casey Beck, Development and Alumni/ae Communications Coordinator, at 215.561.5900, extension 128, or [caseyb@friends-select.org](mailto:caseyb@friends-select.org).

## THE PANTLESS PILGRIM AND OTHER BLAUVELT THEATRE MEMORIES

For many Friends Select students, the Blauvelt Theatre serves as the location of their first encounter with public speaking, stage fright, and standing ovations. Quite often, it's not until long after graduation that they realize some of those experiences were formative ones.



Michael Feldman '86 caught up with friend Ira Pastor '86 at the 2014 Cum Laude Induction Ceremony.

For Michael Feldman '86, Founding Partner and Managing Director of The Glover Park Group, his stage time in the Blauvelt Theatre landed him in the *Philadelphia Daily News*: "When I was in 3rd grade, while performing a lead role in the annual Thanksgiving play, my pants fell down in the middle of a long monologue. You can imagine the embarrassment that might have caused; it's a good thing we didn't have smart phones back then so there weren't any pictures. But as my luck would have it, the father of one of my classmates was the editor of the *Philadelphia Daily News* and wrote an editorial the very next day about the incident. He called me the 'Pantless Pilgrim.' It has a ring to it and has stayed with me, among some circle of my friends, to this very day. That story haunted me through lower school, middle school, and upper school." Michael, former senior adviser and traveling chief of staff to Vice President Al Gore, added that the story was even unearthed by the FBI during his interviews for his job in the White House.

Michael shared the story with students in 2014 as the Cum Laude speaker, and concluded that "You learn as much from mishaps as you do from achievements. And while the achievement that we are celebrating is the first of many you will undoubtedly mark, don't forget to take note of the mishaps, setbacks and even outright failures along the way. Because those are important and are likely to help make you better at whatever you choose to do."

If you would like to share a fond memory of your time in the Blauvelt Theatre, contact Casey Beck, Development and Alumni/ae Communications Coordinator, at [caseyb@friends-select.org](mailto:caseyb@friends-select.org).



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### #iSelectFriends by the Numbers

Overall donors  
**501**

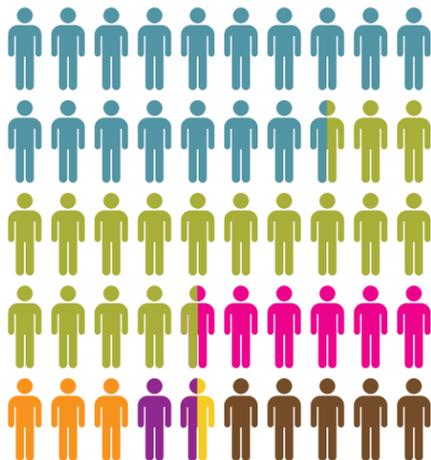
Amount raised  
**\$65,761**

**\$131**  
Average gift

**\$2,000**  
Largest gift

Class of  
**2027**  
2nd Grade  
Youngest Donor

Class of  
**1947**  
Oldest Donor



#### Donors by constituency: donors and % total

**35%**  
Current Parents: 173

**6%**  
Alumni/ae Parents: 28

**33%**  
Alumni/ae: 164

**3%**  
Grandparents: 15

**13%**  
Faculty/Staff: 67

**2%**  
Students: 12

**8%**  
Friends: 42

**THANK YOU!**