New look! New website! New viewbook! With the guidance of C&C parents Ellen Newhouse, Marty Weiss, David Aronson and many volunteers and C&C staff, C&C rolled out a new look and communications strategy over this past year. This effort has run the gamut from development of a new website and viewbook to a new logo and communications materials toolkit. We draw on our philosophy of simple by design every day in our classrooms, and now apply it to our communications with a clean aesthetic and a clear message.

C&C Weighed in on “21st Century Schools” when Director of the Middle and Upper School, Scott Moran, gave a very well-received presentation on the role of progressive education in the “21st Century Schools” movement at the Progressive Educators Network Conference. During the workshop, Scott shared pilot programs from City and Country, with input from ideas laid out by C&C collaborator, MIT’s New Media Literacies Project, among others. His work also provided the topic for our Winter edition of Currents about Technology at C&C.

Elise Clark, Director of Admissions, shared our thoughtful Admissions policies with the greater Metro area when she was cited by New York Magazine in a widely discussed article, The Junior Meritocracy by Jennifer Senior, about early childhood standardized tests. We stand firm in our belief to not use them at the earlier ages, and to look at the whole child when we do in the older ages—our uniquely sensible approach concluded the article on a wise note.

C&C proudly announced a new digital archive that highlights some of the treasures of the C&C Archives, as well as compelling images from today. If you visit the online archive you can see the continuity between what we do now and what we have been doing for almost 100 years. Our rich Archives are a destination for researchers and the C&C community, who can now view, save and comment on our collection online.

Kudos to C&C’s Website! “The most interesting web site for a private school goes to the site of City and Country School,” according to NYC Private Schools Blog. The blog lauded our website for its clear communication of the School’s approach to education: “As you go into the site,” states the post, “you will see it reflects the learning nature and casual yet serious attitude of the school’s mission.” We are so pleased to see that our site enhances understanding of our progressive practices within the wider educational community.

Cross-continental community collaboration…As covered in a recent BBC Article, C&C has been selected, as part of the Figment program, to install one hole in a mini-golf course on Governor’s Island. The inspiration for the project, “The Golf Between Us Is Small,” is the tiny Scottish Island of Gigha. The project is being researched, designed and built by the students, staff, parents and friends of C&C. Locally found, donated and natural materials will be combined with authentic found materials and rocks from Scotland—sent by Scottish schoolchildren—with a mix of plants, wood, polymer and concrete.

Our buildings have been changing shape right under our feet! Over this past year, the basements of all 13th Street buildings have been converted to a usable, beautiful lower level. Our newly renovated 13th Street ground floor and Lunchroom opened the year with a clean, bright space, and we’re rolling along with new classroom plans and more over the summer.

Did we say new classroom space? Yes! We are now accommodating double groups in the VIIIIs, IXs and soon-to-be Xs in 2010-11. Not only have we developed new ways of sharing the program through creative curriculum and teacher collaboration, we have also constructed spaces for the IXs and their smart new Store, and the VIIIIs and their innovative P.O. Work will continue here over the summer as we make space for our growing population in the new building and prepare to welcome a double group of Xs.

The C&C After School Sports Program has grown significantly. 83% of Upper School children played at least one sport this year, all team records improved over years past, and we have played with a diverse group of independent school teams from both Manhattan and Brooklyn.
This year’s fund-an-item (a yearly Benefit activity where funds are raised for special C&C projects), exceeded all previous records. C&C families donated an incredible total of $87,350 to support financial aid at City and Country. Our fundraising in all areas continued to be impressively strong, with the fantastic support of Annual Fund Reps, the Benefit Committee and PA leaders. We wouldn’t have been able to raise over $900,000 in annual funds without all of their devoted work, creativity, chic and delicious Benefit hosting, and for the first time…an online auction!

The 13 members of the XIIIIs class of 2010, who graduated on June 13th on 13th Street will be heading off to high school! Among their choices are: Beacon, Brooklyn Friends, Calhoun, Friends, LaGuardia, LREI, Marymount, Nightingale-Bamford, Packer, Poly Prep, and Stuyvesant.

Sharing Knowledge In and Out of C&C

Our wider community learned from children…City and Country School continued the tradition of hosting many local and far-flung educators and visitors from a range of backgrounds, such as consultants from the renowned design-firm IDEO, a history of progressive education researcher from the Netherlands, educators from India, Germany and Iceland, and over 150 other nursery, early childhood and elementary school educators.

…and we here at C&C learned from each other as we looked to our own community for information and inspiration. In addition to the annual Meet the Grads event that features young alums, the PA held a panel that featured alumni in the sciences who spoke about their time at C&C and how it influenced their lives and careers.

C&C teachers spoke to the PA about their summer curriculum grants. Robin DiJoseph (IIs), described her project to develop a music repertoire for the IIs-Vs. Erin Teesdale (VIs) and Molly Lippman (VIIIs) spoke about their work developing a scope and sequence for math in the VIs and VIIIs. Jessica vander Salm (XIs) described how the XIs traditional study of the Renaissance and the trade city of Venice creates a perfect opportunity to study the convergence of East and West through a study of the Silk Road and China.

C&C Math Consultant Robert Berkman met with VIIIs and IXs parents about current math research and how our VIIIs and IXs program reflects new thinking. Math was also the topic in a re-designed Spring Currents Newsletter. C&C teachers and staff, in addition to twice-yearly Group Nights, hosted 19 Coffee & Conversations focusing on developmental milestones, what lies ahead in the curriculum, and a number of specific topics, such as homework and safety.

Our children learned from many expert parents, teachers, alumni and current students, through classroom visits that focused on composting, sound mixing, architecture, stamp collecting, China, collaborative design, calligraphy, midwifery, printmaking and journalism! And our children, of course, left the classroom to observe their world through trips. Of the almost 100 trips taken this year, some annual and some new: Vs visited the High Line, La Palapa restaurant, and C&C construction on 13th Street; VIs visited cheesemakers at Bobolink Farm, Balthazar Restaurant, and volunteered in a soup kitchen at the Church of the Village; VIIIs visited the NY Harbor and Governors Island; VIIIIs visited Historic Richmond Town on State Island; IXs reenacted the Lewis and Clark expedition in Prospect Park; XIs visited the Chinese Scholars Garden on Staten Island; XIIs visited the Atlantic Avenue Tunnels.

C&C Teachers had the opportunity to learn from local colleagues when they observed in area schools for their Professional Development Day in February. And, in April, thanks to the PA, Alfie Kohn, expert in progressive education practices and child development, and author of The Schools Our Children Deserve, Punished by Rewards, Unconditional Parenting and many more, spent two days at C&C. He visited classrooms and spoke to C&C staff and parents about child-centered education and parenting, achievement, homework, and many other topics we continually examine at C&C.

Finally, we shared our knowledge through several Block Connection Workshops—the program whereby C&C teachers work with early childhood educators to support their work with blocks in their programs—for the first time with public school educators at PS 54 and PS 58.