City & Country had its best fundraising year ever in 2007-2008! For the first time in the School’s history, we raised more than one million dollars in cash. The Annual Fund reached an all time high, and Annual Fund volunteers continued to be a tremendous resource for the School. Major gifts also greatly assisted our efforts to increase faculty salaries and to build an endowment. Another hugely successful Auction, supported by thousands of hours of parent volunteer work, supplied the School with remarkable fundraising and a dazzling evening event. These are surely signs of terrific support from our constituents as we embark upon capital fundraising.

In step with such positive fundraising news, we are thrilled that C&C has signed a contract to purchase the neighboring brownstone at 150 W. 13th Street. This adjacent building will help secure our future by allowing our program and our space to expand. In order to support this expansion, with input from Graham-Pelton consultants, the Board decided to embark upon a capital campaign to ensure we successfully complete our vision. This is a very exciting undertaking that you will be hearing more about in the future.

With additional space under contract, for the first time at City & Country School, the Middle/Upper School program will expand in 2008-2009 with an additional group of VIIIs. We have begun to explore the many issues we’ll need to consider as this ambitious expansion continues each year until the entire Middle/Upper School has two groups for each age.

In typical C&C fashion, the members of the class of 2008 chose a broad range of schools for high school. Among their choices are: Brearley, Brooklyn Friends, Heschel, LaGuardia, LREI, Loyola, Miss Porter's (boarding), Nightingale Bamford, Packer, Poly Prep, Purnell (boarding), Townsend Harris (public) and Trevor Day.

City & Country said goodbye to two long-standing administrators. After 13 transformational years at the School, Wendy Bouthillier stepped down from her position as Director of Development, and after more than two decades devoted to the C&C community as Director of Admissions, teacher, and parent, Lisa Horner has retired from her position. Darrell Yuen has been appointed the new Director of Development; he most recently acted as the Director of Stewardship, Planned Giving & Special Gifts at Riverdale Country School. Elise Clark, former VIIIs Teacher, Lower School Director, and most recently, Lower School Educational Consultant, has been appointed as our new Director of Admissions, with Karen Watson, IIIs Teacher and Lower School Administrative Support, joining the team as Associate Director of Admissions. Wendy will continue on a part-time basis, and Lisa will continue to serve on the Board of Trustees.

The Yards, Passageway and Lobby were botanically enhanced by the introduction of box and barrel planters. With the disappearance of our neighbor’s trees last year, Jane Clarke, Director of the Lower School, and the XIIs teachers, decided on a do-it-ourselves approach: the XIIs began building the box planters for the School, as well as building planters to order. The result was a wonderful programmatic addition, providing much needed “greenery” as well.

This year’s fund-an-item (a yearly Auction activity where funds are raised for special C&C projects), raised more than $41,000. The bulk of this year's funds will be used to support C&C Staff Professional Development Day, one day each year where the entire staff comes together to enrich their work at C&C through workshops, conferences, outside speakers, visits to other schools, or any number of educational activities.

Last year’s fund-an-item monies were used for visiting specialists to speak to individual Groups about specific subjects under study. Two examples: NYC poet, Richard Lewis, worked with the VIIIs, inspiring their own writing explorations. Children’s book writer and illustrator, Maira Kalman, responded to the VIIs when they wrote to her to find out more about her writing process, and invited them to visit her at her home in the West Village. By offering students the opportunity to learn from these scholars, we once again reinforce depth of learning—a basic tenet of a City & Country education.

In what will be an annual Parent Block Building Workshop, an enthusiastic group of IIIs parents built together
under the guidance of C&C III's Teachers, William, Bridget and Karen. Through their hands-on experience with “learning by doing,” they had the opportunity to better understand their children's daily work.

First hand research—often through trips—is a core element at C&C. Among their many trips, C&C children visited the Ironworkers Apprentice School in Queens; the first textile mill in America in Woonsocket, Rhode Island; Tennessee, Mississippi and Louisiana to see sites relevant to the XIII's Civil War study; the NYC Transit Museum; a pottery studio; the Morgan Museum & Library; the Mosque at the Islamic Cultural Center and clothing designer Zac Posen’s workshop.

C&C welcomed over 250 outside visitors this year, almost twice as many as last year!

Among our many visitors were 135 international visitors, including 26 Chinese principals and division directors. C&C was the only independent school they visited in New York City on their trip. Their visit was part of the Teachers College Advanced Seminar for Chinese K-12 Education Leaders.

We continued to receive visitors from Iceland—in epic numbers—95 in all! C&C's progressive practices are well known in Iceland where our outdoor blocks are a staple in early childhood environments throughout the country.

C&C also hosted many local educators, including 10 NYC public school principals, supporting their interest in gathering ideas for enrichment and math education for use in several NYC schools.

With a planning grant from the Irving Harris Foundation, C&C further developed our plans for Block Connection workshops—the program we initiated last year, whereby C&C teachers work with Head Start teachers to support their work with blocks in their programs. C&C's founder, Caroline Pratt, was a great believer in sharing the discoveries and practices of her teachers' work. The Block Connection is a continuation of her commitment to teachers teaching teachers.

Principal Kate Turley chaired a New York State Association of Independent Schools' 10-year evaluation in October of 2007 for the Convent of the Sacred Heart School in New York City.

The Parents Association brought in excellent outside speakers, including Catherine Steiner Adair, a noted academic and researcher who spoke with families about friendship development, teasing and bullying, and Dr. Justin Richardson, author of Everything you NEVER wanted your kids to know about Sex (but were afraid they'd ask).

The Parents Environmental Committee held the first C&C Bike Outing in May. Families met at the playgrounds at Pier 51 and rode in groups to Wagner Park at the tip of Manhattan for a picnic on the lawn.

The whole C&C Staff community continued to benefit from PA-sponsored catered lunches on Fridays. Not only does the Staff appreciate the wide variety of delectable foods, but they also enjoy collegial and casual social time where they can mingle and get to know one another better—all in all, a highly-valued, nourishing tradition.

Admissions initiated “Information Sessions” for IIs and III's applicant families. Four sessions were held this year, hosting 30 applicant parents in each session with a tour and slide show. The sessions were a great success and will be continued next year. An additional 168 applicant parents for IIs/IIIs were toured by parent and administrator tour guides.

With support from the Parent Diversity Group, C&C organized an information evening for diverse applicant families to learn more about City & Country by meeting current C&C families and School personnel. We had excellent attendance and will make this evening an annual event.

A documentary filmmaker visited C&C to film the VII’s during Block Yard and other group work times for a film on the history and practices of progressive education. The film covers the key figures of the progressive education
movement and features Caroline’s Pratt’s philosophy.

A new After-School offering: the student Community Service Group met with a volunteer parent for a monthly community service activity. Some hands-on activities included: making holiday cards for the Village Nursing Home; baking cookies for the Church of the Village feeding program; making small blankets for dogs in shelters; sending cards to troops in Iraq; knitting child-size hats for CancerCare.

The Development Office cataloged over 3,000 archival photographs, encased each photograph in acid-free mylar and sorted all shots by category. Most of these photographs are in excellent condition and some date from the early years of the School (1913-1914).

C&C with kid o, a C&C-parent-owned educational toy store, developed a brand of unit blocks, City & Country School Unit Blocks. The blocks are available in three block sets for various age groups and stages that reflect Caroline Pratt’s original design. By working with C&C to realize Pratt’s educational vision, kid o brings all children—not just C&C students—a fundamental tool for learning and play. The blocks will be available at kid o, kidoproducts.com, C&C and retailers nationwide; one distributor has already ordered 6,000 sets!