

# A New Year, A New Goal

By Sasha Clayton

Happy New Year! Welcome back to Hilldale for the start of 2008! Each month, we have a theme which is introduced to the students at the weekly assembly. This month's theme is "Goal-Setting." My hope is to inspire students to assess an area that they would like to improve upon, whether it be an area in academia, ethics, organization, punctuality, sportsmanship, or another self-identified area. In alignment with this theme, I will be passing out a survey which asks students to reflect upon their own strengths and weaknesses as well as to assess how they learn. I will also ask parents to provide insight into their child's learning process. This is a piece of the individual education plan which we are putting into effect for each Hilldale student. With information from multiple sources — students, teachers, parents, and administrators — we will be better able to better assess how to help each child achieve his/her best. With this information, we can create attainable, worthwhile goals which will ultimately improve the quality of learning for all of our students.

Making resolutions is a traditional practice many of us participate in as we turn over a new year. Often these goals are broken because they are unattainable. We strive to meet lofty goals because, ultimately, we believe that we can make changes in our own lives and in the world. Mahatma Ghandi revealed that "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." Our staff hopes that, through our Ethics, Self-Awareness, and Contemporary Issues & Action classes, we are helping our students learn how they can affect change in their communities and in the world. The trick, however, is to start small enough to build our skills and enhance our self-esteem through successful experiences. Then we can move forward to enact the larger changes in our global community.

Our goals can be as simple and powerful as wishing to see more kindness in the world. I have seen time and time again that every act of kindness comes back to us, just as every act of anger and cruelty is reflected as well. When we choose to bring about acts of kindness, it is reflected in our children, our families, our colleagues, and our politicians. Creating a pattern of achieving one's goals will foster self-discipline and success in both academia and business for our children in the future. Together we can help reveal the importance of self-awareness and the power of individual change.