



AMERICAN HERITAGE
SCHOOL & FAMILY EDUCATION CENTER

September 25, 2013

Dear Parents, Employees, and Friends,

Societal trends in American families and communities reveal declining religiosity, decreasing family stability, declining faith in God, increasing immorality, and fading appreciation of America's inspired form of government. With this ever-rising tide of secularism, young Americans nationwide are leaving their churches in higher numbers each year. I am writing today to ask for your financial support. American Heritage School is an anchor for our children and grandchildren in an increasingly turbulent world—and we need your help. Before I describe how you can help, I invite you to take just a moment to understand *why* American Heritage School, and *why* this request for help.

The motto of American Heritage School is “Educating Hearts and Minds for Latter-day Families.” Contained within that single phrase is an answer to three very important questions about the school: *What? How?* and *Why?* “Educating” is *what* we do. “Hearts and Minds” is *how* we do it—a unique method of principle-based education that develops Christian character.

But understanding *why* we do what we do is even more important than *what* we do or *how* we do it. In the AHS motto, the phrase “for Latter-day Families” answers the question *why?* It's our core strategic vision in one breath. Christ is our first cause, and strong Christian families are the fullest expression of that cause. “Latter-day families” are not just “Latter-day *Saint* families”—rather they are *all* families who face the unprecedented moral challenges of the latter-day culture in which we live. Our cause is more urgent than ever. In the words of one of our recent graduates:

I look forward to taking this next step into a world that desperately needs the Savior and His light. I hope and pray that each of us will go forward with faith in Christ and a determination to spread Christianity, Liberty, and Charity wherever we go. Where much is given, much is required, and I can say with confidence that we as a class have been prepared and are now ready to do what the Lord requires of us. We are the future fathers and mothers in Zion, who will teach our children in righteousness. Jesus Christ lives and is the Savior of all mankind. Through Him alone we may receive exaltation. His perfect love can change the world, and our responsibility is to be instruments in His hands to spread His pure love to others. (Holly, Class of 2011)

This is *why* American Heritage School exists. This is *why* we do what we do. It's *why* we teach math, science, history, and language. It's *why* we vacuum the floors and answer the phones.

In 2008, when most organizations were instituting spending freezes, we made a courageous decision to invest in our mission and our future. A significant portion of our cash reserves were

allocated at that time to (1) raise teacher compensation; (2) add a high school program, including expanded facilities K-12; and (3) make the school more accessible to families around the world through distance education programs that would promote our mission and raise much-needed funds at the same time.

Now, five years later, having made significant progress with those objectives, we are in a position to support families not just here in Utah, but nationwide. For the first time since 2008 we are covering our operating expenses *without* drawing on our limited cash reserves. With a better and stronger school than ever, and with continually increasing enrollment demand, future years at AHS look even brighter—but we still have significant needs, and we must not lose our sense of urgency and personal responsibility to preserve and promote this kind of education for our children and grandchildren.

Here is the opportunity:

We are asking every family to make a financial contribution or a pledge—as generous as you can—by Friday, October 18, which is the date of our benefit dinner and auction. Every dollar donated, up to \$100,000, will be MATCHED thanks to many generous donors and parents at the school. The more families that participate, the more it will mean to major donors in attendance that night who want to know how broadly and significantly our families give to AHS beyond our tuition commitments. If you can join us on October 18, please RSVP by next Friday, October 4, by purchasing tickets on our website, or by sending an e-mail to Lisa Mulvey at lmulvey@ahsmail.com (don't forget to state the number of guests and entrée preference-- chicken or vegan). Also, if you have something to donate, such as a timeshare, a week or a weekend at a personal cabin/vacation home, framed artwork, professional services, or other goods/services that could be donated to the school—these kinds of donations become very valuable in an auction setting where donors have come to support the school. If you cannot join us at the benefit auction or donate an item, an envelope is enclosed here. This simple but profound act of giving, not just of our time and talent—but of our treasure as well—strengthens and sustains a culture of sacrifice, which protects and perpetuates our mission as much as any other principle we aspire to practice as a school community.

Understanding *why* American Heritage School is the first step to understanding *why give to this cause*. We also know that the more you understand *why the need for donations at AHS*, the more you are likely to support our cause at a more significant level. So—here are a few common questions and answers about the AHS Annual Fund campaign.

Q: Why does AHS need donations? Isn't tuition enough?

A: Tuition only covers *half* of the true cost of a seat at AHS. The School has received numerous donations through the years that have blessed the children and teachers in countless ways. It is only through donations and alternative profit centers (like Distance Education, Latter-day Learning, and The Family School) that we are able to keep our tuition so affordable while offering the quality of education that we now enjoy. We need your help to continue this model of operating. It is a model intentionally designed to keep the spirit of entitlement at bay, and to infuse a spirit of

gratitude and sacrifice into what we do. By the way, we are seeing unprecedented success in the growth of these other profit centers, which bless homeschool families and also help to support our on-campus families in many different ways. Your support of Distance Education is a direct investment in our future success. Please know that raising tuition is always a last resort.

Q: Can't the school just raise prices and cut costs? That's the way for-profit businesses do it. Why the emphasis on donations and volunteerism?

A: Like many other non-profit (for-cause) organizations, AHS measures its effectiveness by mission impact and long-term sustainability, not profit and earnings per share. Many of the world's oldest and most impactful organizations are non-profit entities, such as churches, schools, charitable organizations, and municipalities. Of course, financial resources are critical for any organization, and many nonprofit organizations are quite profitable—but that is not their driving purpose, only a byproduct of it. We understand the importance of business principles such as competing in free markets and leveraging the self-interest of customers and employees. Given our mission, however, we are very careful that these market forces do not push the school off mission, or overtake the very important principle of sacrifice. Teachers and administrators at AHS make less than they could earn elsewhere. They *sacrifice* to come, and they are drawn by a mission and spirit that transcends profit motive. Likewise, most families and employees at the school give financially in addition to tuition that they pay. They *sacrifice* to ensure that the dangerous culture of entitlement (“I’m paying full price for this, so I *deserve*...”) does not overtake the spirit of gratitude (“I’m paying only a part of the price for this, so I am *thankful*...”).

Q: Is there a specific fundraising goal this year? How will the money be spent?

A: Our goal in this year's Annual Fund campaign is to raise \$600,000, which comprises three critical priorities: (1) \$200,000 to improve our employee retirement benefits; (2) \$200,000 to further develop our Distance Education Program; and (3) \$200,000 to replenish cash reserves that have been carefully used over previous years to increase capacity and improve programs. Every unrestricted dollar donated to the school will be divided evenly among these three priorities, and each priority is very important. Of course, any donations designated for a specific purpose at the school will always be applied 100% to the designated purpose. We also support our Parent Organization fundraising goals with the Annual Fund. To that end, the first \$20,000 we raise at the October 18 benefit auction will be used to start replacing classroom computers for our teachers, many of whom are using computers that are nearly 8 years old, and also to begin installing ceiling-mount projectors in primary elementary classrooms to replace older and less-effective overhead projectors that have been used for many years.

Q: Why donate now? Are these fundraising goals really achievable?

A: Yes! Last year we raised approximately \$525,000. If we are successful in raising just \$100,000 at our October 18 auction, we will have effectively raised \$200,000—1/3 of our total goal in the second month of school. If you cannot donate now, a pledge for giving later in the year will also greatly help. Many donors will be present at the benefit auction on October 18. The more personal commitment we demonstrate by our own school community, the more trust others will have in making an investment in our mission.

Q: I thought the Fall Festival was our fundraiser? Didn't ticket sales and bake-sale proceeds raise the money for our goals this year?

A: No, and that was not the intention. Although the Fall Festival was a major fundraising vehicle in past years, it is entirely a social activity—purposefully intended to create an early opportunity for families at the school to meet, greet, play, and unify with each other during the first few weeks of school. Ticket proceeds were sufficient only to cover the cost of the food and games, with just a little left over to plan and execute the event next year.

Q: What about the plans for a new campus? Is any of this money going toward land or new buildings?

A: The school is not currently engaged in a capital campaign for new land and buildings. The Campus Master Plan was produced in 2011 in response to a request from LDS Seminaries & Institutes of Religion asking where a seminary building would be built on our campus if and when our high school reaches a certain size (our growth trend places that within the realm of possibility in the next few years). If our entire \$600,000 Annual Fund goal is met, our next goal is to acquire land for future construction; however, we emphasize that we are not actively involved in a current capital campaign for that purpose. Right now our most important fundraising priorities are improving employee benefits, developing the Distance Education Program, and replenishing our cash reserves.

Thank you for spending the time to read this letter. We are so very grateful for YOU! Your contribution to the success of our school community has already been invaluable. Every act of volunteerism, every offering of talent, and every grateful word and note makes a tremendous difference. With this letter, our hope is that you will also understand more deeply the importance of financially supporting the school. Please RSVP on the school's website for the October 18 benefit event. If you cannot attend, we invite you to give or pledge what you can with the envelope enclosed, or on our website at american-heritage.org/Home/Give.

May the Lord bless you and your family, and may American Heritage continue to be an anchor in the lives of *all* of our families for generations to come.

Gratefully,



Grant Beckwith
Head of School