

Spring Semester Brings Even Further

BY TODD VETTER '03



ROBERT LISAK

In the best of times, *community* can be an elusive quality. In the midst of a major renovation, it can prove to be especially so.

But despite the limitations that have accompanied the reconstruction of the Divinity School, a renewed spirit of community has begun to develop at YDS. And while it may be as difficult to adequately define *community* as it is to foster its growth, this past year was witness to a number of activities and initiatives that fostered greater fellowship among the students, staff, and faculty, as well as excited further discussion on both the meaning of community and its significance in the life of the school.

Two of the traditional hallmarks of community at YDS have been the daily chapel service in Marquand and the fellowship of the evening meal in the Refectory.

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Students take a break from their end of the term studies during morning coffee hour in the Common Room.

Professor David Bartlett presents David Alan Baer '04 with a Bainton Book Prize during a community meal. Sarah Scherschligt '04 also received the prize.



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With the renovation forcing the school out of Marquand Chapel for the better part of a year, morning worship moved to the new Niebuhr Lecture Hall. The demands of convening worship in an academic space were met with remarkable success by Chapel Ministers Kimberely Hoare, MDiv '03, Alice Yafeh, MAR '02, and Jason Richardson, MDiv '03. With the reopening of Marquand this fall, there is great hope that the chapel will serve as the foundation for a restored spirit of fellowship.

One of YDS's most enduring events, the Spring semester dance, known this year as the "Spring Fling," was a resounding success for the community this April. The evening began with ballroom dancing accompanied by a jazz quartet and later featured dance hits played by a DJ. This semi-formal event offered the community one of several opportunities this year for food, fellowship, and fun.

Growth of Community Life

In 1994 the school lost many such opportunities when the closing of the residences on the Quad ended the long tradition of the community gathering for dinner each night. Since table fellowship is critical to the life of any community, the YDS Student Council felt that some attempt should be made to bring the community together for meals, if not as a nightly occurrence, then as a monthly one. The initiative began with a Thanksgiving Potluck organized by Student Council president Ashley Grant, MDiv '03, and then grew into the Council's monthly Community Meal.

Thanks largely to the generosity of former Dean Rebecca Chopp, the monthly meals encouraged faculty, staff, and students to gather together and share the joys and concerns of their lives free from the work of the academic day.

As Yale Divinity School moves into new classrooms, a renovated library, and new community space, the challenge remains to best utilize the new space to benefit the YDS community as well as provide resources for the University as a whole. Dean Harold Attridge has continued the same spirit of generosity and encouragement toward student efforts to develop and expand the life of our community.

Community life should extend not simply to the faculty, staff, and students of the school, but to the life of Yale as a whole. It calls upon both its present population and those who have gone before to give it life.

A spirit of community is necessary to the effectiveness of a professional school. It is perhaps more so in a Divinity School, where professional formation goes beyond the academic to embrace both the social and spiritual as well.

With the reconstruction nearly complete, the Divinity School can look forward both to the promise of modern facilities as well as the return of traditional spaces that will shape both its role in the life of the University and the city of New Haven. ♦



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Students prepare for the closing hymn during the final Chapel Service of the spring semester in Niebuhr Hall.

YDS students formed a highly informal soccer league during the later winter months. The team played every Saturday at the Yale Bowl.

Student Council President Ashley Grant relaxes in the sun after a long day of classes and meetings.