Spiegel, a 12-year-old seventh-grader, says with a laugh.

In July, the school will move into its own building at Mills College, a 150-year-old women’s college a couple of miles away. The two-story stucco structure, which encloses an inviting courtyard, was built in the 1920s as an orphanage for Chinese girls; more recently, it was used as a campus conference center. Fittingly, the building was designed by Julia Morgan.

With a 25-year lease, the institution named in the famous architect’s honor won’t be moving again anytime soon. Last fall, students celebrated by wrapping the building in ribbon, which DeBare, as president of the school’s board, cut during a gala dedication ceremony.

But her work is far from finished. The new building is undergoing $2.5 million in renovations, many required to bring it into compliance with earthquake codes and accessibility laws. The institution still has no endowment and its oldest alumnae are only in high school. So, between trips to promote her book, DeBare is overseeing an ambitious capital campaign. “There’s no quiet phase,” she sighs. “The most we ever raised before in one year was $200,000.” To date, they’ve raised about $500,000.

Meanwhile, her fourth-grade daughter is more than a year away from applying to the Julia Morgan School. But DeBare says she already feels gratified at knowing others choose to send their children to an institution whose culture she helped shape from its inception, one whose traditions are still evolving. And if she could repeat her own adolescence, she’d make one big change: she’d enroll in a girls’ school.

~Anne Stuart

Share and Share Alike

The Harvard Alumni Association (HAA) has taken a big step toward adding shared interest groups (SIGs) to the list of alumni organizations it serves.

Earlier this year, the HAA board approved a policy enabling the association to support alumni SIGs. “We hope to work with groups such as the Harvard Black Alumni Society and Harvardwood,” an entertainment-industry networking group, says Charles Cardillo ‘91, HAA’s director of University-wide affairs. “They exist already without our help, but we want to make them feel like they’re more a part of Harvard.”

Ultimately, the HAA will offer eligible SIGs the same kinds of benefits it now offers College classes and regional alumni clubs: help with operations, membership, and promotions, including website hosting and on-line discussion capability. But first the association must figure out exactly how to apply eligibility criteria, especially regarding political activity.

“Classes convene around a shared experience over a period of time. For clubs, you’re gathering people based on regional proximity,” Cardillo says. “With SIGs, it’s more complicated.” That’s because, by definition, many SIGs are activist groups. To receive HAA benefits, they must agree to abide by University restrictions on using the Harvard name and logos, and by HAA’s policy that the association itself “remain neutral on all political issues both inside and outside the Harvard community.” If SIGs take public positions on any issue, they must make it clear that they don’t represent the University or the HAA.

Within the next few months, the HAA will invite a handful of SIGs—for example, the black-alumni and entertainment-industry groups and the Harvard Gay and Lesbian Caucus—to test the policy in a pilot project. Later, the initiative will be extended to other groups as well.

Comings and Goings

Harvard clubs regularly host lectures, seminars, and social gatherings. Following is a partial list of Harvard-affiliated speakers scheduled to speak to local clubs in May. For details, contact local clubs directly, call the Harvard Alumni Association at 617-495-3070, or visit www.haa.harvard.edu.
