HOUSE RENEWAL &
THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE
HARVARD IS A PLACE OF DISCOVERY for people leading positive change in the world, be they scientists, scholars, or statesmen; poets, performers, or entrepreneurs. That is our heritage and it must be our future. The world is challenging Harvard and each of us to do more, to be more. The world is evolving, shrinking at an ever-accelerating pace, powered by ideas, the most valuable currency of today and tomorrow. Ideas have always been the fuel for excellence at Harvard. This is our time to encourage, embrace, and lead change. This campaign is our opportunity to ensure for this and every generation that Harvard continues as a premier source of ideas and leadership, advancing teaching, learning, and research, with a unique commitment to truth and excellence. This is our time to ensure Harvard continues as a place of discovery SHAPING THE FUTURE.
Kirkland House residents welcome a new member on Housing Day.
Right: House residents create their own versions of Pablo Picasso’s Head of Seated Woman, 1962.
At Harvard, learning and discovery happen everywhere. Our students learn about leadership, about the world, and about themselves in many places around campus and beyond—from art studio to athletic field, from soup kitchen to stage, and especially around the dinner table in their Houses.

The Houses are among Harvard’s most important learning places, where undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty live, work, and learn together. Ninety-seven percent of Harvard College upperclassmen live in one of the 12 Houses—communities where risks are taken, confidence is built, and connections are made with peers, faculty, and tutors. The Houses bring Harvard down to scale, shaping memories and forging friendships that last a lifetime.

As every College graduate understands, the Houses are more than just residences—they are multifaceted communities that provide undergraduates with an intellectual as well as a physical home. Alongside interactions with peers, the presence of House masters brings the faculty into the lives of undergraduates and unites academic and residential life. Tutors—graduate students pursuing their own scholarly endeavors at Harvard—also live side by side with undergraduates. Bolstered by this community of mentors, undergraduates find themselves in an environment designed to cultivate creative risk taking and personal discovery. The Houses are the great connector, fully immersing students in the intellectual life of Harvard and exposing them to new perspectives.
In a world moving ever faster and demanding more of every institution, for Harvard to continue as a premier source of ideas and leadership—advancing teaching, learning, and research—we must invest to reinvent and reinvigorate the Houses. The Harvard Campaign for Arts and Sciences offers our generation an opportunity to transform residential education and the academic and communal experiences of our students.

House Renewal is the most ambitious capital project in Harvard College’s history. It can be realized only through partnerships between the University and our most dedicated alumni and friends. The Harvard Campaign is our moment to forge these partnerships and transform the lives of College students—the inventors, risk takers, and problem solvers; scientists, scholars, and statesmen; poets, teachers, and entrepreneurs, who are key to Harvard’s future and to leading change in the world.

More than 80 years ago, Harvard set the new standard for liberal arts education in the United States with the establishment of the seven original Houses. The River Houses were funded with a visionary gift of $13 million from Edward Harkness. This gift gave Harvard the chance not only to build needed Houses but also to adapt existing buildings to meet the evolving needs of students.

Through the Campaign, we have the opportunity to reaffirm the central role of the Houses in undergraduate education. Once again, this commitment to advancing residential education will require philanthropy on a significant scale. The investment is critical. The need is urgent.

Physical improvements to the Houses will be meaningful. Their purpose is to encourage the interaction of the people within, recognizing the changing needs of our students and the changing world in which they are learning.

The renewal of the Houses will yield an array of improved spaces, carefully designed to better enable education, exploration, relaxation, and socialization. For example, renewed Houses will feature a larger number of common areas—including lounges and art and performance spaces—as well as enhanced connectivity in learning spaces with wireless Internet and in classrooms and seminar rooms with SMART Boards, Skype capabilities, and other technology support on each floor.

New hall and stairway configurations will promote greater student-adviser engagement, foster small-group and peer-to-peer learning, and enhance the development of community, which will facilitate greater opportunities for students and advisers to connect. Ties between graduate student tutors and undergraduate residents will be strengthened through the creation of advising communities in which tutors and students live, socialize, and study more closely together. The original exteriors of the Houses represent a magnificent architectural heritage that will be united with student needs today and in the future.

House life has been a cornerstone of the Harvard College experience for generations of undergraduates. Through this campaign, we can ensure that the Houses are not only cornerstones but also launchpads for the next generation of world-changing leaders. In the process, we will create a legacy of generosity that will stand for future generations of students living and learning in our Houses.
DOUG MELTON’S WORK IN DIABETES HAS THE POTENTIAL TO IMPROVE MILLIONS OF LIVES. AND WHEN HE LEAVES THE LAB, HE COMES HOME TO ELIOT HOUSE.

There, he serves as co–master with his wife, Gail O’Keefe; they work to foster the kinds of student experiences that make the Houses at Harvard so special.

Where else would students have the chance to join one of the world’s top stem cell scientists for dinner to discuss a wide range of topics, from the nature of citizenship, to a new app, to Renaissance dance?

These casual conversations are part of what makes life in the Houses so distinctive. Thanks to Melton and O’Keefe, students can drop in on one of Eliot’s “fireside chats,” informal events with prominent writers, human rights advocates, and politicians. Eliot residents can also work in the House’s woodshop; relax with a little knit one, purl two; or attend a “meatballs with the masters” dinner party. The social and intellectual possibilities are endless.
“WE WANT TO PLACE EMPHASIS ON OUR STUDENTS’ BEING WELL-ROUNDED INDIVIDUALS. DIVERSITY OF INTERESTS IS VERY IMPORTANT TO US,” SAYS RONALD SULLIVAN, JR., CO-MASTER OF WINTHROP HOUSE WITH HIS WIFE, STEPHANIE ROBINSON. THEY LIVE THERE WITH THEIR TWO SONS, CHASE AND TREY, AND THEIR DOG, NIETZSCHE.
BEYOND THE CLASSROOM
WORKSHOPS IN THE HOUSES

SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT LEARNING HAPPENS OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM.

Taking CS50, also known as Computer Science 1, is almost a rite of passage at Harvard. Students, many of whom are new to computer programming, learn not only how to program but also how to think like a programmer. Taught by David Malan ’99, PhD ’07, senior lecturer on computer science, the course climaxes with a fair open to the entire Harvard community. Malan describes the fair as “an epic display of final projects.”

Malan is a pioneer of online teaching, and he’s also committed to one of the College’s most venerable traditions: the House system. He offers CS50 office hours in Leverett House, inspired by the Physics Nights organized by Howard M. Georgi ’68, Mallinckrodt Professor for Physics and master of Leverett, in the Leverett dining hall. Malan says he wants spaces in the Houses to provide a “center for academic study and conversation.”

Some of that study and conversation happens in an unexpected place: the basketball court at the Malkin Athletic Center. For students up late on Wednesday nights finishing their Thursday physics problem sets, sometimes a study break at Malkin is in order. How much projectile motion does a player need to get maximum hang time? How much vertical velocity thrust does it take to spend the most time in the air? It’s an important part of Physics Night, a regular event that underlines the importance of Leverett House to its resident students.

Right: Leverett House Master Howard Georgi
97% of undergraduates call one of the 12 houses home while at Harvard.

The River houses were funded with a visionary gift of $13 million from Edward Harkness in 1928.
“THE HOUSES MAKE THE BREADTH AND DEPTH OF HARVARD MORE MANAGEABLE AND MORE ACCESSIBLE,” SAYS STEPHANIE KHURANA, WHO IS CO-MASTER OF CABOT HOUSE WITH HER HUSBAND, RAKESH. THEY ARE SEEN HERE (LEFT) WITH DAUGHTER NALINI MOVING CABOT HOUSE SUPPLIES ACROSS RADCLIFFE QUAD ON MOVE-IN DAY.
IT’S A THURSDAY AFTERNOON IN FEBRUARY, AND DOCTORAL STUDENT ARI HOFFMAN HEADS BACK TO LOWELL HOUSE.

Once inside, Hoffman is on the go for the next seven hours: joining tea in the masters’ residence, celebrating with a student organization he advises, dining with a handful of undergraduates, coaching a senior’s five-minute “Lowell Speech.”

Hoffman, one of Lowell House’s 25 resident tutors, relishes these opportunities. “We immerse ourselves in student life—they can see that you’re invested in their well-being.”

Harvard’s nearly 300 resident tutors, typically graduate students pursuing PhDs or professional degrees, are community builders in the 12 residential Houses. They form an important part of the academic and personal advising network available to students in the Houses and beyond.

House Renewal seeks to enhance the programming that happens inside in the Houses—including advising. One of the most exciting changes involves reconfiguring tutor entryways into “advising communities” with tutors’ rooms centrally located on the same floor as the rooms of the undergraduates they guide. This horizontal flow is designed to spark more impromptu encounters than the strictly vertical entryways in the older Houses.

“Advising is facilitated by trust,” says Lee Gehrke, Quincy House co-master. “Casual hallway conversations help set the stage for the more formal advising that takes place in the Houses.”
They volunteer side by side with them for Harvard College Serves (HCS). Launched in 2012, HCS joins freshmen with House public service representatives and public service tutors for volunteer projects at area nonprofits. They help fill boxes with beans, pasta, coffee, and other goods for delivery to food pantries that feed hungry families in eastern Massachusetts through the Greater Boston Food Bank; help stuff backpacks with clothes, school supplies, and toys for Cradles to Crayons; and help clean at the Harvard Square Homeless Shelter.

“A couple hours out of our lives will help hundreds of families feel a little better, a little safer in the world,” says Juliet Spies-Gans ’15. “It was a lot of fun getting to know some of the Lowellians that I had never met before and becoming better friends with those that I did know. I don’t know many things that could have been better use of that time.”
A newly created common space in Quincy House.
WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US in this campaign so that Harvard continues its leadership and influence in the world at a time of dynamic and accelerating change.

THE HARVARD CAMPAIGN FOR ARTS AND SCIENCES