

From the Headmaster

GARHETT WAGERS



A group from the class of 2021 serving at Kids Meals



Garhett Wagers
Headmaster

If we could distill our goal for each student during his or her time at St. Mark's, it would be to encourage each to become his or her very best self; whatever that self is called to be. Some may say we are working to create a person who has enough self-awareness to answer: what am I good at, what is hard for me, and how do I solve problems when they appear? When someone can answer these questions about themselves, we believe they are ready for both high school and life. In order to learn about self, one has to be willing to take risks, make mistakes, and be wrong. We don't expect perfection from our students; that isn't realistic, and perfection as a standard creates an obstacle to success and creativity. In a recent presentation I attended, I heard Dr. Brené Brown say, "People have to learn how to get back up on their own. If they don't, they won't take risks and innovate, because they are afraid to fail and fall down." We acknowledge that making mistakes and falling down are part of growing and learning; it's the getting back up on their own that takes time to develop.

In our work with young people, identifying and practicing principles in leadership is an important part of our efforts. Whether your hope is for your child to be a leader, or to be able to identify a leader worthy of following, or both, they first need to understand what makes a good leader. An important quality among leaders is courage. We believe courage

is not about being fearless, it's about deciding that something is more important than the discomfort of fear. Choosing comfort over courage does not make a healthy leader. Admitting you made mistakes is uncomfortable. Apologizing is hard for people, and making amends for our mistakes can be even more difficult. Yet, this is the path to moving forward as an ethical leader.

The social emotional learning work we do at St. Mark's is embedded in the whole experience and can manifest itself in moments like morning meeting and Boy World | Girl World. It is here where we call our students to challenge themselves to make the courageous choice in service to their community, which is also in service to themselves. Wholeness as a person requires honesty and integrity, which begin inward; am I honest with myself, and do I live my values? At St. Mark's, we provide this reflection opportunity as part of daily life, as such, our children are ready for the path ahead, and sought after members of the high school communities they join.

Garhett Wagers
Headmaster