

From the Headmaster

GARHETT WAGERS



Quinn Royer, Lauren Herr, and Maya Kilpatrick, '25, enjoy recess



Garhett Wagers
Headmaster

In my words to our departing 8th graders this past May, I reminded them of their readiness for the next phase of their lives: high school. There are many things they may worry about as they transition from St. Mark's. Since they go to a variety of schools, (17 different schools for the 51 graduates this year!) we are not in the business of preparing our graduates for "a" school. Rather, we are in the business of preparing them for success in life, which helps regardless of where they land. The angst they feel may be similar to that of our alumni who are graduating high school and transitioning to college. They too need this same preparation, which we feel is developed foundationally here at St. Mark's.

We work to help our graduates know who they are and what is needed to manage themselves in various situations. We want them to understand what they are passionate about, what they struggle with, how to get help, and how to get up when they fall. These are skills that schools need to cultivate in children

before we send them on to their next phase of life. The content they've been exposed to throughout the years has shown them important views of the world that color their perspective, and their disciplines of self.

All the ways we evaluate, plan, and grow our curriculum, our teaching, our learning resources, and our physical space are based on the idea that we want our students to grow as fearless learners, increasingly more aware of themselves and increasingly more comfortable with who they are becoming. This past year brought a new food service program to campus, with an expanded focus on learning about nutrition and challenging ourselves to try new things. This summer, we are renovating our entire front playground, creating a more thoughtfully designed play space that will support our students' creativity and need for play.

In May, our Board of Trustees approved the school's Strategic Plan, which is included in this magazine. This plan calls us to continue to be stewards of our students' intellectual curiosity, faith, and passion for discovery. It will foster a path of thoughtful collaboration of all that we do to serve the whole child in learning, as both a person and a global citizen, all through our identity as an Episcopal community.

At our core, we are a school where growth happens. Children may join St. Mark's as a two year old, wearing diapers,

and learning to form sentences. By the time they graduate the 8th grade, they are sharing carefully prepared speeches in front of large audiences, making decisions about what to pursue in high school, and finding their own voice. Our faculty members are challenged each year to self-reflect and grow in their commitment to helping students engage and learn. Our campus is constantly evolving as we consider what our community needs. To grow we must often stretch ourselves. At St. Mark's, we acknowledge that stretching isn't always easy, so we do it in partnership, showing up every day, working to build the best version of ourselves possible.

Garhett Wagers
Headmaster