



Winter 2012

ST. PATRICK'S PRESS

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ACTIVE, GROWING, CHANGING

ENRICHING THE PROFESSIONAL CONVERSATION

Planned Giving Society Established

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Photo above: This remarkable photo of the St. Patrick's Foxhall Campus from the air shows clearly the outlines of the future athletic field on the right side, with the substantial retaining wall that will support the entrance road near the center of the photo.

On the Cover: Grade 1 teacher Andrea Miller works with students. Her work with the Nueva School for Social and Emotional Learning is detailed beginning on page 22.

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A Grade 3 student is hard at work on her reflection journal in the class of Mary Beth James, whose study at Project Zero influenced this activity. Story on page 17.

Children “grow into the intellectual life of those around them . . .”

-Lev Vygotsky

Enriching the Professional Conversation

*Supporting Faculty and Staff
As They Continue to Learn and Grow*

Peter A. Barrett

Head of School

St. Patrick's has long strived to be a community in which all participants, not just students, are "active, growing, and changing." Having established that expectation in our Statement of Philosophy, we commit ourselves to challenge and support individuals in "what we understand to be a lifelong process." While we root that commitment in a particular understanding of adults and their ongoing development, we also believe that our ability, as educators, to inspire thoughtful activity, growth, and change in our students is diminished—indeed, it vanishes—once we ourselves are no longer active, growing, and changing.

We work to fulfill this important commitment to our faculty, staff, and administration—and ultimately our students—in a variety of ways. For example, the Day School budget provides funding for faculty and staff participation in professional conferences and workshops locally, regionally, and nationally (and even internationally, as the Central and East European Schools Association conference and other grant-funded activity suggest). We also invite individual presenters to

work with either our full faculty or specific groups within the faculty at a particular grade level or in a particular division here at school. We regularly identify specific topics to engage the full faculty and staff—last summer's shared professional reading, which has informed many a conversation this year, concerned educating for global awareness—or individual divisions (Nursery, Lower, Upper). In addition, members of the faculty and staff who arrive at St. Patrick's without

a master's degree may participate in the Master's Degree Program, which provides significant funding in support of graduate study. Yet one more example is the Parents Association's annual awarding of summer study and travel grants to faculty and staff to "cultivate personal interests, encourage new ways of thinking, and make new discoveries possible," one of the many ways that organization supports the Day School.

A vibrant professional conversation not only results from each participant's ongoing growth and development but also promotes every other participant's growth and development. To participate in such a conversation—to contribute to it, to learn from it, to be challenged by it—is to open one's self to new possibilities in one's chosen profession. In turn, each of us becomes more thoughtful about the teaching and learning settings we seek to create for our young people, more accomplished in our ability to sustain those settings, and more likely to be asking the right questions about individual student performance and the overall effectiveness of our work within those settings. Indeed, the vibrant professional culture here at St. Patrick's does much to explain our ability to attract and retain such talented faculty and staff.

This edition of the *St. Patrick's Press* looks at faculty members' participation in four different summer professional development opportunities: Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education; a Responsive Classroom workshop (which current or prospective teachers have attended in a variety of locations); the Social and Emotional Learning Teacher Training Institute at the Nueva School in Hillsborough, California; and the Summer Writing Institute at Columbia University's Teachers College.

While we are pleased to send faculty and staff to one- or multiple-day conferences and workshops during the school year, the summer months provide excellent opportunities for teachers and others to spend several days and often up to a week immersed in a particular area of study with educators from across the country or around the world. As valuable as such an opportunity is, it becomes even more so when we can send a team of educators to these kinds of workshops. Returning to St. Patrick's with new ways of thinking about teaching and learning inspired and informed by their participation, these individuals then have available, next door or down the hall, professional partners in developing, implementing, sustaining, and assessing new programs.

Three of these programs—Project Zero, Responsive Classroom, and the Summer Writing Institute—have attracted significant numbers of St. Patrick's faculty members in recent years. In the case of Responsive Classroom, training that virtually all of our Nursery School and Lower School teachers have completed, we have even arranged for recently appointed teachers to complete the summer course, prior to their official start at St. Patrick's. As a result, the teachers have a shared understanding of a particular emphasis on social, emotional, and academic growth within strong classroom and school communities—and even a shared vocabulary to promote that important work.


Similarly widespread among St. Patrick's faculty and administrators is the exciting work of Project Zero, for most of them including an intensive, one-week summer institute conducted at Harvard. (In the fall of 2010, our three art teachers attended a three-day workshop here in Washington, D.C. entitled "Educating for Today and Tomorrow" that was sponsored by Project Zero.) Referencing Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky's statement that children "grow into the

intellectual life of those around them," Head of Lower School and PZ participant Gretchen Spencer has observed, "Project Zero has inspired all of us to reflect on our teaching and to be sure we are creating classrooms in deliberate and thoughtful ways that reflect the rich intellectual life that we want children to grow into during their years at St. Patrick's—and beyond."

Having so many faculty and administrators so well-versed in the organizing concepts, language, expectations, and routines and structures of Project Zero, and having those individuals widely dispersed throughout the grade levels, from PK to Grade 8, and instructional areas make for an enviable level of coherence, consistency, and follow-through. And when those forces are in support of meaningful learning, developing understanding, and providing rich classroom contexts for that learning and understanding—the hallmarks of Project Zero—that level of coherence, continuity, and follow-through can be especially powerful.

Of course, the accounts included in this issue of the *Press* are mere snapshots from what is a much more extensive collective professional journey undertaken by our faculty and staff. Following these individual accounts, we offer a listing, itself not comprehensive in nature, of a wealth of other professional development activities in which those individuals have engaged. That extensive list demonstrates the variety of sponsoring organizations, from the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance and the American Choral Directors Association to Teachers College, Trinity Washington University, and the University of Virginia. And the topics themselves range from neuroscience to equity and diversity, from first aid and CPR to bullying. They include young children's mathematical development, fostering independence in early childhood students, the integration of art and classroom learning, and religious pluralism in schools.

In full, these few individual accounts and the more numerous listing of professional development opportunities seized by our faculty and staff reveal a cadre of educators seriously committed to advancing and refining their professional skills and to creating a worthy intellectual environment at St. Patrick's. The breadth of their activity also reveals an organization, a learning community, that values that ongoing activity, growth, and change not only in the young people but also in the adults who inhabit and shape those critical teaching and learning environments.

We are grateful for the support of the broader community in these efforts, in more formal ways through the Day School Board of Trustees and the Parents Association—both of which make sure that there is substantial funding available for the ongoing professional growth of our faculty, staff, and administration—and in less formal ways through a parent body that values great teaching and recognizes and supports it here at St. Patrick's. 

a broader vision

The Campaign for St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School



The view from the southwest corner of the athletic field reveals the scale of the work that has been completed since the summer. On the left-hand side of the photo, the stadium area is visible; the concrete that will form the bleachers was recently poured. The 3,000-square-foot plaza area is located above the bleachers, in front of the retaining wall adjacent to Foxhall Road. Visible in the background is the completed retaining wall that will support the entrance road to the Foxhall Campus.

Construction Continues to Progress on Foxhall Campus

Photo Blog Launched and Updated Weekly to Keep Community Apprised of New Developments

In spite of a rainy late summer and fall, construction of the Day School's first regulation-size athletic field on the Foxhall Campus has progressed significantly since the last Press publication. According to current projections, the athletic field will be ready for use this spring, in time for the lacrosse season.

The construction team has completed building the large retaining wall that will support the entrance road to the Foxhall Campus, the walls that will support the stadium and plaza area, and the structure for the bleachers and stairs in the stadium. The plaza, located above the stadium seating, is approximately 3,000 square feet in size, and the bleachers will accommodate 660 Wolfhound fans.

Over the winter, the team will continue work on the reinforced earth wall on the south end of the athletic field and begin improvements to Foxhall Road

that will include utility work, the addition of a northbound acceleration and deceleration lane, and a new stoplight across from the German ambassador's residence.

As part of our ongoing effort to keep the community informed about the progress on the Foxhall Campus, we are happy to announce the public launch of the blog for A Broader Vision. Weekly updates provide photos and descriptions of that week's construction.

We encourage conversation on the blog, so please leave your thoughts, comments, and questions. Your questions may become the subject of a future post! You can receive an email notification when the blog is updated by clicking "Follow" in the bottom right corner of the page. Visit www.abroadervision.wordpress.com.

Planned Giving Society Named for Harvey and Sarah Moore



The Day School's First Bequest Received in 2011 After Relationship Spanning 60 Years

In order to build St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School's endowment to ensure the long-term financial health of the Day School, the Board of Trustees is committed to moving forward with a planned giving program as part of our advancement efforts. The planned giving program will begin with a bequest component.

Bequests comprise gifts to the Day School under a donor's will or trust and can range in size from a specific sum or portion to the entirety of an estate. We anticipate that, through the years, bequests and other planned giving options such as life insurance, trusts, and life income arrangements will bring the Day School meaningful gifts from parents, grandparents, alumni, neighbors, friends, and community members and will help the Day School's academic, co-curricular, and financial aid programs and campus facilities flourish.

For those who have included the Day School in their estate planning, we look forward to welcoming you to our newly formed planned giving society, The Moore Society, named in memory of Harvey C. and Sarah M. Moore. The Moores' relationship with St. Patrick's began in the early 1950's when they became members of the Parish. Dr. Moore, once a junior high and high school teacher, was organizing the fledgling Department of Anthropology at American University. He put powerful

talents to work for 19 years on the Day School Board as well as on the Church Vestry. Harvey and Sarah Moore devoted themselves to educational institutions throughout Washington, D.C. and, over the years, shaped the lives of hundreds of St. Patrick's children. As Dr. Moore once said, "To make an intelligent society work, introduce a little bit of economics, history, and quite a bit of values in elementary school." It is an honor for the Day School to name the planned giving society in memory of the Moores, for it was in 1993 that Harvey and Sarah included St. Patrick's in their estate plan with a bequest and made the first gift to the Day School endowment to establish the Harvey C. and Sarah M. Moore Endowment for Financial Aid. It was then in 2011 that the Day School received its first bequest, of \$392,000, from Harvey and Sarah Moore.

It is the steadfast commitment of parents, grandparents, alumni, neighbors, friends, and community members such as the Moores that has made St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School such an incredible place for teaching and learning. For more information about creative tax-wise ways of giving through planned giving or The Moore Society, please contact Carrie Ahlborn, Assistant Head of School for Development, at 202-342-3454 or ahlbornc@stpatsdc.org.

Wolfhound Watch:

Girls JV Soccer Wins Regular-Season Title

The girls junior varsity soccer team ended a hugely successful regular season undefeated and seeded number one as they went into the Capital Athletic Conference (CAC) tournament in November. Ultimately, the team captured the third-place banner in the playoffs, beating Woods Academy in the consolation game by a score of 5-2.

The boys junior varsity soccer team also competed strongly this season and kicked off the CAC tournament with a win against National Presbyterian School. The Wolfhounds were ultimately defeated by Green Acres in the second round.

Congratulations to all our Wolfhound athletes!



Photo top left: A Grade 6 student holds the competition at bay during a cross country meet at the Norwood School. The Wolfhounds cross country team had a season marked by competitive scores and placements at meets, regularly capturing top spots in races. **Top right:** A JV player maneuvers the ball away from a Green Acres School competitor. **Bottom:** The girls JV soccer team proudly displays their banners—the team captured first place in the Capital Athletic Conference regular season and third place in tournament play.

Horizons Learning Continues During the School Year

St. Patrick's joins Maret and Norwood schools as members of Horizons Greater Washington and the broader Horizons National organization. This summer-based intervention provides academic enrichment to low-income students during the months when they might otherwise experience a decline in their academic growth, but the program also continues into the school year.

While the bulk of work with our Horizons students takes place over the summer, we also invite our students and families to St. Patrick's for three Saturday sessions during the school year. Led by Jenifer Congdon, Grade 4 teacher and Horizons St. Patrick's site director, St. Patrick's faculty and staff volunteer their time and talent to work with students who attended Horizons this past summer. In addition, many Day School alumni who worked as Horizons Assistant Teachers over the summer return to volunteer their energy and enthusiasm. The first Saturday session occurred on November 5.

With all of this volunteer support, Horizons students experience a morning filled with engaging and enriching academic activities. While students are learning, their parents are invited to attend a workshop. This fall's parent workshop was centered on math games that parents can play with their children to strengthen math skills while simultaneously providing an opportunity to spend time together as a family—something that all families strive to do more often. Each Saturday morning concludes with a family activity that parents and guardians can do alongside their children.

These family Saturdays allow us to keep in contact with our Horizons families and offer academic support to students and guidance to their parents. This work complements the learning that is taking place at their home elementary school, Bancroft Elementary School, in Mount Pleasant.

We look forward to seeing our Horizons students and their families return for two additional Saturdays in January and April!



Horizons students worked this summer on a variety of enriching projects, including the science experiment pictured here. Their learning continues with Saturday sessions this school year. While students are engaged in academic activities, parents have the opportunity to attend workshops highlighting activities that can be done at home for continued academic enrichment.

Horizons Advisory Committee Named, Chairs Selected

The St. Patrick's Horizons Volunteer Council, this year co-chaired by alumni parent and longtime volunteer Roxanne Little and current parent Noreen Paul, works to build awareness of Horizons in the St. Patrick's community and help support the preparations for the summer and Saturday programming. If you are interested in getting involved in the St. Patrick's Horizons Volunteer Council, please contact Noreen Paul at ncpaul8800@hotmail.com.

Chairs:

Roxanne Little
Noreen Paul

Committee Members:

Carrie Ahlborn, Assistant Head of School for Development
Julie Anbender
Amy Campbell
Jenifer Congdon, Horizons St. Patrick's Site Director and Grade 4 Teacher

Manal Corwin
Karen Kelliher
Jamie Lilly
Mary Morgan
Ginger Pape
Diane Reinke
Antoinette Rodocanachi
Mittie Rooney
Ellen Teplitz

Celebrating 40 Years: Anne Muir Honored at Reunion Luncheon



Anne Muir, second from left, was the honoree at this year's Parent Reunion Luncheon for her 40 ongoing years of service to the Day School. Posing in front of the newly-unveiled St. Patrick's Wolfhound, Anne is flanked by Head of School Peter A. Barrett (left), husband Cassin, daughter Elizabeth '80, and son Stephen '81.

Nearly 100 parents of Day School alumni gathered on September 30 for the ninth annual Parent Reunion Luncheon. Chaired this year by Nancy Van Duyne (parent of alumni) and Diana Hannes (parent of alumni), the event honored Anne Muir for her 40 ongoing years of service to St. Patrick's.

Head of School Peter A. Barrett celebrated Anne's myriad contributions to the life and spirit of the Day School. She has been a gifted, forceful presence at St. Patrick's since the first Grade 6 graduating classes in the 1970's. We are grateful to Nancy and Diana for their time and expertise dedicated to this event, to the many parents of alumni who attended, and to Anne, for her continued enthusiasm!

Director of Admission and Financial Aid Reflects on Service

Jennifer Danish

Director of Admission and Financial Aid

Now in my tenth year at St. Patrick's, I find myself reflecting on how I have changed since my arrival in 2002. Perhaps one of the greatest gifts I have received is the opportunity to live a life that involves service to others—a central focus of a St. Patrick's education. Each year, admission officers from all over the United States and Canada gather at a conference sponsored by the Secondary School Admission Testing Board. Three years ago, I was lucky enough to attend the conference in New Orleans and participate in a day-long service project with my colleagues to beautify and improve the schoolyard of a newly created college preparatory charter school. Having an impact on an area so devastated by Hurricane Katrina was truly life-changing. So, when the opportunity to get involved in this year's service in Phoenix, Arizona emerged, I jumped at the chance.

Our work this year focused on the Gila River Indian Community, which is home to two tribes—the Pima and the Maricopa people. The Indians in this area have benefited from the richness of the Gila River but, for many years, they lost access to it when settlers claimed use of the resource. Slowly, they are rebuilding their livelihood. On September 21, our work focused on the Boys and Girls Club and the Head Start childcare center in the community. We worked in the playground to clear brush and weeds, painted a gymnasium, and cleaned debris from a windswept cemetery.

In addition to doing real work to help the children of this area, we also spent time with James, a teacher and coordinator at the childcare center. At the start of our day, he led us in prayer with song. In keeping with tradition, we faced all four directions as he sang a blessing. At the close of our work, we danced in a circle with a small opening in one spot that would welcome in all those elders and loved ones who have died. Between these rituals, James shared stories about his people. In the end, this gift of culture was a wonderful reminder that by giving of ourselves in service, we get so much more in return from the people we meet along the way.



Jen Danish (left) hauls brush and weeds at the Boys and Girls Club in the Gila River Indian Community.

Day School Welcomes New Faculty and Staff



Front Row, left to right:

Dr. Rhia Hamilton is an experienced high school social studies teacher and school leader who has joined St. Patrick's as the Director of Auxiliary Programs. Rhia holds a bachelor of arts degree in history and a bachelor of science degree in social studies education from Miami University of Ohio, a master's in education policy from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and a doctorate in school leadership from Teachers College at Columbia University.

The Rev. Dr. Janet Whaley Zimmerman is the new Day School Chaplain. She comes to us from All Saints' Episcopal Church in Austin, Texas, where she served as curate. Janet holds three degrees from the University of Texas at Austin—a bachelor's in special education and elementary education and master's and doctoral degrees in special education. She also holds a master's of divinity degree from the Virginia Theological Seminary.

Ruth Compton came to the Day School with two years of experience as a librarian in D.C. Public Schools. She also previously worked for the public policy arm of the United Methodist Church and spent eight years as a software engineer. Ruth holds three master's degrees, one in applied mathematics, one in divinity, and one in library information science.

Katherine Lea became part of the Development Office team in June as the Director of Alumni and Parent Programs. Most recently, Katherine worked at the Chandler Chicco Agency, a global healthcare communications agency here in Washington. She graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a bachelor's degree in English and a minor in journalism and mass communication.

Anna Klepper joined St. Patrick's as the new 1A homeroom teacher. Most recently, she taught Grades 4 and 5 reading, Grades 8 and 9 English, and a Grade 7 elective on learning differences at North Country School in Lake Placid, NY. Anna holds a bachelor's degree from St. Lawrence University and a master's in education from Lesley University.

Back Row, left to right

Rachel Levin this year became the new 3A homeroom teacher. This is Rachel's eighth year of teaching. For the past three years, she taught Grade 4 at Rodeph Sholom School in New York City. She holds a bachelor's degree from Connecticut College, where she studied art history, Italian, and museum studies. She earned her master's degree from Bank Street College in museum education.

For the past four years, **Lauren Marshall** taught Kindergarten at the Chadwick School in Palos Verdes, California. This year, she is partnering with Asha Simon as K1 co-head teacher. She earned her bachelor's degree in music as well as her master's in elementary education from the University of Virginia.

Tony LeMenager began this summer as the new Facilities Manager. Previously, Tony worked at the Stone House Group through which he acted as the Facilities Manager for the National Presbyterian Church and School. He holds a bachelor's degree in natural resource management with a concentration in conservation biology from the Colorado State University.

Danielle Wade joined the St. Patrick's Grade 2 team this year from the Greenwich Academy in Greenwich, Connecticut, where she taught Grades 2 and 4. She has also taught English as a foreign language in Germany. Danielle earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Pennsylvania in Germanic languages and literature and linguistics and a master's in childhood education from Manhattanville College.

A classroom teacher by trade, **Jonathan Fichter** will leverage his love of all things technological as St. Patrick's new technology coordinator. For the past seven years, he has taught English literature, most recently at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School in Rockville. He earned his bachelor's degree in English from Yale and his master's in education in curriculum and instruction from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

In each edition of the Press, we bring you sketches of current Day School faculty and staff. We are proud to share the stories of the many accomplished people who make St. Patrick's the outstanding institution it is.



Eric d'Aubermont

Grades 7 and 8 Spanish Teacher

Though he has always enjoyed languages, it was not until Grades 7 and 8 Spanish teacher Eric d'Aubermont studied abroad in Spain while a student at Goucher College that he decided to become a teacher. He hoped to be able to share his love of Hispanic culture with young people and has been sharing his enthusiasm and expertise with the students at St. Patrick's MacArthur Campus for the past three years.

Eric is now in his sixth year of teaching, primarily at the middle school level. He holds a bachelor's degree in Spanish from Goucher College and earned his master's degree in Spanish linguistics and pedagogy from Georgia State University.

Though he is strict in class and has high expectations for his students, he also strives to make learning another language enjoyable. Beyond sharing his passion for the language, history, and culture of Hispanic countries, his favorite part of teaching is getting the opportunity to know his students as individuals.

Eric enjoys all sports, but especially soccer. This past school year, he was the boys varsity soccer coach. He and his wife Judy just welcomed a dog, Mallory, to the family, and they enjoy playing with her in their yard and walking her around the neighborhood.



Angie Blake-Moore

Nursery School Teacher

Now in her seventeenth year at St. Patrick's, N1 teacher Angie Blake-Moore regards the Day School as her second home. Since her arrival, Angie has been engaged, married, had two children, and brought her children to the Infant-Toddler Center and Nursery School. She studied at James Madison University, where she graduated with a degree in English and a minor in early childhood education.

Though she taught a Kindergarten class and a Grade 2 class in Fairfax County before joining the St. Patrick's team, she thinks that working with three- and four-year-olds is her niche. "They are so young, so impressionable, and (if you're lucky) so enthusiastic. Everything is new to them, from planting corn seeds and seeing them grow tall so quickly to walking proudly in their first Halloween Parade."

Angie became a teacher because it is so "exciting, funny, and rewarding. Sometimes a child will say something that is so deep or so hysterical that by 9:30 am they have made my day." She enjoys teaching Nursery School because of the variety of lessons, from what it means to be a part of a group, how to respect others, how to form and follow their own ideas while appreciating and incorporating the ideas of their peers, and how to be a good friend, how to paint with watercolors, what guinea pigs like to eat, and how many paper towels you really need to dry your hands.

Angie believes her teaching philosophy is described, at least in part, by this quote from Rachel Carson: "If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in." She wants to be that adult!

Angie lives in Virginia with her husband Dylan, a Prince William County firefighter, her son Riley PK3, and her daughter Zoe, age 8. They have a dog named Max, a guinea pig named Sophie, and a fish tank that houses an absurdly large catfish.

Project Zero: Making Thinking Visible

Project Zero was founded at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 1967 to study and improve arts education. Philosopher and program founder Nelson Goodman believed that the arts should be studied as a serious cognitive activity but that “zero” had been established about the field. While that is no longer the case, the Harvard research and training program has been in existence for more than 40 years and has expanded to include many other academic fields. Project Zero’s mission is to understand and enhance learning, thinking, and creativity in the arts, as well as in humanistic and scientific disciplines, at the individual and institutional levels.

Over the last three years, 17 members of the Day School faculty and staff have participated in the Project Zero institute, a reflection of our commitment to providing teachers with engaging, high-quality professional development that influences and shapes teaching and learning in meaningful ways. At St. Patrick’s, Project Zero has ignited conversation and reflection about the nature of understanding and how to best support students in developing their understanding across disciplines.

Teachers have applied the ideas, strategies, and tools they have learned at Project Zero in a variety of ways. Most important, in order to develop and assess understanding, teachers strive to help students make their thinking visible by encouraging students to make connections, wonder “what if?”, ask questions, explain their reasoning by giving evidence, take multiple perspectives, solve novel problems, apply knowledge in new situations, create metaphors, and reflect on their learning.

To make this process visible to our readers, we are featuring here the Project Zero-inspired experiences of four teachers, two from the Nursery School and one each from the Lower School and the Upper School.



PK2 teacher Janet Kline (right) examines seed pods with her students.

Janet Kline

PK2 Teacher

In the summer of 2010, several St. Patrick's faculty, along with a community of international learners, attended Project Zero at Harvard University. A sense of energy and an air of excitement pervaded the seminars we attended, as we considered big ideas in education: *What are the components of an effective education for the world that students live in now and will live in 10, 20, or 50 years from now? What is understanding, and how does it develop?*

As we explored these ideas, one of the strategies we discussed was *thinking routines*, and one of the routines that could be used with young children was called *See, Think, Wonder*. Using this type of inquiry with young children promotes curiosity, increases the children's ownership of their learning, and deepens understanding.

In PK2 we used *See, Think, Wonder* to introduce an exploration of medieval tales and castles. To begin the routine, we displayed a mural of knights in battle with a scene of castles in the background. We asked the children, "What do you see?" Their responses ranged from the obvious, knights and horses, to more subtle observations, such as a castle far, far away, flags that surrounded the border of the mural, and a small black stripe on a knight's helmet. An excitement took over as the children discovered more details in the picture.

After they made their observations, we asked, "What do you wonder?" They began asking questions: "What is in the tents?" "Who lives in the far-away castle?" "Why do some knights not have horses?" "Why are they carrying flags?" Other children responded: "I think they have flags to show they are knights" and "I think the horses have costumes to protect them." This type of inquiry encourages children to generate ideas and promotes connections among ideas, both new and familiar.

The children's detailed observations, the thoughtful questions, and the depth of their thinking reflect the power of this routine, even for such young children. From their observations and questions we were able to launch our exploration of castles and kings and queens, and the children were engaged and excited about our new investigation.

The power of using this type of inquiry with children is evident not only as a tool for introducing long-term investigations, but also in day-to-day discoveries. For example, a child recently found a seed pod on the playground and inquired what it was. Instead of offering a direct answer, I gathered a small group of children and asked them what they saw. Their answers included a cocoon and a bat. After several other guesses, we opened the pod and the seeds flew out. Following this experience, we read a book about the milkweed plant and how it sustains the monarch butterfly. This type of learning nurtures what Project Zero calls a culture of understanding—a culture where children's curiosity is stimulated, time is provided for careful observation, thinking is valued, and a depth of understanding is a goal.

Lisa Merotto

PK3 Teacher

At Morning Meeting recently, we took out our question box, a small wooden box with no exceptional qualities other than the mysterious item it contained. What could be inside? The children sat forward eagerly, and the box was transformed into an item of intrigue. We began to think, to wonder, to question. Was the item alive? Could they play with the item? They wondered where I had found the treasure the box contained. The children began to do what children do best and explore the world around them with curious minds, one question leading to the next.

This summer, I spent a week studying with Project Zero at Harvard's Graduate School of Education. Through lectures, workshops, and study groups, we explored ideas on how to develop children as critical thinkers. One of the many thought processes that resonated with me at Project Zero was the way we can encourage children in the classroom to become critical thinkers through the use of questioning. As children formulate their own questions, they become engaged in a new way. They take greater ownership of their learning, deepen comprehension, and make new connections and discoveries on their own. A teacher's role is often just to facilitate this spirit of inquiry, to teach the children how to ask questions and become critical thinkers. As my PK3 children gathered around enthusiastically, calling out questions to help solve the mystery inside our question box, I was struck by the way they were cultivating a life-skill that is fundamentally important for all learning.



Mary Beth James

Grade 3 Teacher

In all the questioning about what makes a writer and perhaps especially a thinker . . . my journal is the collection of things, gathered in one place and extracted from their context in such a way that they become the unique possession of a single life and a map of all my thoughts. - Loren Eiseley

Perhaps no writer left us better evidence of his thoughts about everything he encountered than naturalist Loren Eiseley, whose journal was a daily routine. Looking at Eiseley's journals is a lesson in Visible Thinking, a teaching philosophy developed by Project Zero that allows students to explore through both words and art their thinking on any range of content. Visible Thinking has helped me deepen learning in my classroom by developing simple routines that encourage students to respond to content with curiosity and creativity. Consider what my students say about thinking when they answered the question, "What is thinking and what does it look like?" *"Thinking is taking thoughts in and combining thoughts to make new ones."* *"Thinking is having math files in your brain."* *"Thinking is looking back into your memory."* These insightful ideas by students were the result of a simple framework that got students to think about thinking.

Project Zero diminishes my need to control my students' ideas and enlarges my students' investment in creating ideas. I came away from a week-long workshop inspired by the many new techniques I learned. In particular, I was fascinated when I attended a workshop about reflection journals. Personal journals, rich expressions of a student's conceptions, are comprised of both text and illustration. In my classroom, each student has his/her own journal that s/he works in throughout the year. I provide students with a varied selection of art materials to create their pictures and express their thoughts, thereby encouraging them to focus on a single idea more deeply. The end results are unique and insightful.

Journals are a routine that can be used in a variety of classroom settings. Students might be creating a scene from a story they read, or responding to a question about an unusual object, or describing the purpose of a real 18th-century artifact from a simulated settlement we explore called "Jamesville."

Reflection journals have allowed me to move away from narrowly defined questions that in turn have a narrow range of answers and toward more open-ended purposes for writing. This approach allows students to value their ideas more and move away from generic answers and the belief that there is only one correct answer—the one the teacher is looking for. In doing so, students become more independent writers and their individuality is far more evident.

By practicing the techniques of Project Zero, I find my teaching inspired by the ideas of my students. By slowing down and allowing my students to sustain their thoughts in more expansive ways, I listen more, talk less, and encourage each student to seek his/her own voice, rather than trying to replicate mine. Indeed, by year's end, the students' journals become maps of all their thoughts.

Thérèse Khan

Grade 5 Teacher

Early in my career, I learned that becoming an effective teacher is a journey on which you never reach your final destination because experiences along the way send you on a new journey or in a different direction. My experience this past summer attending Project Zero has left me better equipped for my journey—a journey that will enable me to provide an environment rich with opportunities to help my students become aware of their thinking potential and gain more in-depth understanding of what they study and, as a result, work, or rather *learn*, with a greater sense of purpose.

Project Zero reconfirmed the importance of creating an environment that provides students with time and opportunities to observe, think, wonder, explore, and collaborate. The desired outcome is that students not only learn the material, but also how to learn and, in turn, come to realize that learning and understanding lead to new learning and new understanding. Implementing simply-structured exercises such as *See, Think, Wonder* into our everyday learning is helping to achieve this outcome. When the students are asked to look at a map, other types of images, or models, I first ask, "What do you see?" followed by "What do you think about this?" and, finally, "What does it lead you to wonder?" Taking the time to observe, think, and wonder leads to learning how to learn, and the knowledge gained leads to deeper understanding.



Grade 5 students \ are pictured here, journaling.

Project Zero also reminded me of the importance of keeping the “big picture” in mind for students. In Grade 5, as the students learn about latitude and longitude, or landforms and where they are located, they are continuously reminded that we are learning to “think like a geographer.” As we move through the curriculum, taking the time to return to the question “What does it mean to think like a geographer?” helps students to gain a better understanding of how geography, the setting of our world’s story, influences decisions people make—and it is this understanding that will hopefully help them make informed and effective decisions in the future. There is also ongoing dialog about how we gain understanding and how we can recognize understanding. We discuss that understanding is gained from practice, trial and error, research, and feedback. We know we understand when we achieve desired results, apply the understanding to new

situations, teach it to others, and have people ask us for help as they try to achieve their own understanding. These types of discussions help to motivate a work ethic with a greater sense of purpose for the learning we do both in the classroom and at home.

Periodically I ask my students to reflect on how their understanding changed and what brought about the changes. Providing opportunities for the students to share their thinking and reflect on how their understanding changed has given them a greater voice in the learning process, greater ownership for what they understand, and a sense of wonder for what comes next on their journey as learners. Armed with what I have gained from Project Zero, I am eager to continue these journeys with the students. 🌱

Welcome to the Responsive Classroom

According to its website (www.responsiveclassroom.org), the “Responsive Classroom approach is a way of teaching that emphasizes social, emotional, and academic growth in a strong and safe school community. Developed by classroom teachers in 1981 and continually refined to meet schools’ needs, the approach consists of practical strategies for helping children build academic and social-emotional competencies day in and day out. In urban, suburban, and rural settings nationwide, educators using these strategies report increased student engagement and academic progress, along with fewer discipline problems.” Among its guiding principles are the ideas that the greatest cognitive growth comes through social interaction and that the social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum.





Photo left: A PK2 student enjoys a classroom full of “new discoveries.”

Photo right: Nursery students shake hands as part of a Responsive Classroom exercise.

Marie Steiner
N1 Assistant Teacher

There is not much that can match the enthusiasm, or nerves, of a three-year-old at the beginning of a school year, unless you compare it with the enthusiasm and nerves of a new teacher.

I recall late August last year—as I adorned the classroom with colorful, inviting materials, went house-to-house to meet every one of our children, and awaited their arrival to N1—how I was filled with excitement and ready for each student to fall in love with Nursery School. With each colorful oil pastel, I thought of the art that would soon hang from our walls. Every book was a story that would have them actively listening and engaged. The sensory table filled with water and bubbles would be abuzz with children washing and taking care of “babies.” Ah, yes, my eyes were twinkling with the possibilities.

And then the first day came, as did 13 enthusiastic children. The oil pastels for creating beautiful artwork were broken on the table. The books were on the floor, not to mention that when I had tried to read a story, I was not sure that anyone

had been listening. And while the baby dolls in the sensory table may not have been any cleaner, several children were certainly wetter. At the end of the day, as I recalled and reviewed the day’s events, my head teacher said, “I think that went well.”

I quickly learned, as my head teacher reminded me after the first day of school, that many of the students coming to Nursery School are new to a classroom setting. The beginning of the year is full of exciting new discoveries. Even the daily routine is something that must be taught. Where do we put our belongings? How do we line up to walk down the hall? Why do we raise a hand to share a story at meeting time? As a teacher, I cannot just put out oil pastels, books, and a table full of bubbles and hope for the best.

Fortunately, the summer before beginning at St. Patrick’s, I attended a week-long seminar on Responsive Classroom with several other new teachers. This week was a chance for me not only to learn the Responsive Classroom philosophy, but also to share and learn from teachers from all over the D.C. area. I left Responsive Classroom with ideas, with newfound energy and, most importantly, with confidence that I could incorporate Responsive Classroom into my teaching.

During the seminar, I remember having a moment of pause while discussing the language we as teachers use with our students. We discussed how using empowering language, mixed with modeling and role play, creates clear



expectations and increases the child's ability to do things independently. Therefore, I had to re-think how I was teaching. Was I using language that was understandable? Have I shown the children how to complete a task or to use a certain material? Have I guided them in such a way that they are able to have a successful, productive day?

The Responsive Classroom philosophy emphasizes the idea that cognitive development is enhanced by social development. Teaching our children to be kind, helpful people is one of our most important roles as teachers. Using Responsive Classroom strategies, we work to build a community in which children can interact with one another, express their needs, and work cooperatively. Our daily Morning Meeting provides many opportunities to develop these skills. Children learn to greet one another, to share, and to listen. How important these three things are to a classroom environment!

The act of sharing can be difficult. Taking turns, speaking in a group, and making friends can be challenging for many three- and four-year-olds. Through

Morning Meeting, the classroom becomes a community, with the students as active members. There is always a greeting, an activity, time to share, and a morning message. This exercise allows each member to feel important and heard, while allowing other members of the class to be involved as listeners.

Every afternoon, a group of Nursery students from N1 and N2 come together for lunch. At the beginning of the year, the children learn each others' names, sing songs, and play name games. Once names are learned, we greet each other by giving a handshake and saying hello and, when we're feeling silly, we use a voice or a high-five to greet our friend. While some children are timid at first, their confidence soon grows, as does their eagerness to participate.

Responsive Classroom has taught me that a greeting, a high-five, a handshake, or a smile—simple as these acts may be—is a milestone for many young children. Every day, while sitting on a rainbow spot and listening to the children go around the circle and greet each other, I am reminded just how important those simple things are. 🌈

Social and Emotional Learning in the Primary Grades

Annie Miller
Grade 1 Teacher

Social and Emotional Learning is a process for helping children develop the fundamental skills for life effectiveness—including **self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills,** and **responsible decision-making.**





Andrea Miller
Grade 1 Teacher

"I'm feeling joyful this morning, because my grandparents are coming to visit this afternoon!"

"I'm feeling a little sad because my dad went away for work."

"I'm feeling tired because I woke up too early."

These were the voices of my Grade 1 students during our first Check-In, an activity I learned about last summer at the Social and Emotional Learning Teacher Training Institute at the Nueva School in Hillsborough, California. The Nueva School has a well-recognized Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) program. The institute presents that program as one model, while the presenters work closely with participants to develop a "toolbox" of teaching strategies and activities that will work in different school settings.

We continued around the circle as each child who wanted to share expressed how s/he was feeling that morning.

"What did you notice about what people shared?" I asked.

"A lot of people seem happy this morning," one child offered.

"And a whole bunch of tired!" chimed in another student.

"Three people were sad because their parents are away," said one girl.

"I noticed that, too," I replied. "What might we do if we know that some of our friends are feeling a bit sad today?"

"We can cheer them up."

"Or tell them a joke."

"We can ask them if they want to play!"

The Check-In is one tool that helps children develop awareness of their

Photo left: Grade 1 students both checked in “happy” today.


Photo right: A Grade 1 student smiles after returning to his desk following the Responsive Classroom Morning Meeting.



emotions and the ability to communicate information about themselves. It also allows them to build empathy for and understanding of others. As a teacher, I have been amazed to see six-year-old children begin to articulate rather abstract concepts and to listen to each other with kindness and thoughtfulness. I have also found the Check-In helpful because it gives me greater insight into the experiences and feelings that children bring with them to the classroom. We do this activity about once a week, and it fits in perfectly with our regular Morning Meeting. The children have also enjoyed participating in different themed Check-Ins such as “If your feeling was a color what would it be?”

The Check-In is just one component of the SEL program presented at the Nueva Institute. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is a nonprofit organization that works to advance research-based SEL programming. As I learned in the opening session at Nueva, CASEL has identified five core competencies that are taught and practiced in SEL programs. These competencies are self-awareness, self-

management, responsible decision-making, social awareness, and relationship skills. In my classroom, we started off our SEL work by doing activities to help the children develop a vocabulary for emotions. We are now practicing effective communication and active listening. Our next steps will be developing conflict-resolution skills and strategies for handling strong emotions.

According to CASEL, research studies have found that social and emotional learning not only improves students’ social and emotional skills, behavior, and attitudes about themselves and other people, but it also improves their academic achievement. The tools I gained at Nueva fit in perfectly with St. Patrick’s commitment to “developing character, advancing human understanding, and promoting academic excellence.” I am eager to continue the process of developing students’ understanding of themselves and others over the course of this school year. 

Grade 5 language arts teacher
Jared Passmore assists a student
during "writer's workshop."



The Writing Institute is designed for educators,
classroom teachers, school administrators,
and curriculum specialists who are
committed to turning classrooms into
richly literate reading and writing workshops.

The Writing Institute at Columbia University

Jared Passmore
Grade 5 Teacher

Teachers College at Columbia University has no shortage of distinctions, standing as the oldest and largest graduate school of education in the country and sitting at or near the top of the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings each year. One of its most remarkable initiatives is the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, which collaborates with schools throughout New York City and across the globe to bring, as we here at St. Patrick's would call it, "exceptional literacy," to thousands of students each year. The program was founded by Lucy Calkins, author of the seminal works *The Art of Teaching Writing* and *The Art of Teaching Reading*, and she continues to direct the project to this day.

Each year, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) offers two Summer Writing Institutes and two Summer Reading Institutes. Participants in the institutes work through the entire process of teaching, from studying methods and gathering examples of best practices to planning and executing lessons and writing curriculum. I was particularly interested in attending the Summer Writing Institute because I wanted to increase my facility with the writing workshop, a technique of teaching writing developed, or at least codified, by Calkins.

Due to the quality of the summer institutes, and on the recommendation of multiple colleagues who are veterans of the program, I watched carefully for

the date when applications would be posted and applied as early as I could for the Summer Writing Institute. I was so glad I did! The speakers during the large-group activities were captivating and modeled a wide variety of techniques for us to use in writing workshops, and the small-group sessions afforded us the opportunity to practice those techniques and get feedback from colleagues and project staff.

In part as a result of this experience, each student in Grade 5 has a Writer's Notebook to collect ideas and practice the craft of writing. With this exercise, we try to see the world as writers do—noticing details more carefully, making associations and connections—and express what we notice in a way that puts the reader in the middle of that scene and allows him/her to share in the experience. We practice many different ways of approaching each type of writing and use a mini-lesson at the beginning of a block of writing time to strengthen our mechanics or share a writing technique, which we can then incorporate and practice immediately.

Without a doubt, the most consistently surprising result of the writing workshop is hearing the sound of pencils scratching—and only the sound of pencils scratching—as a classroom full of writers practice their craft. 🌱

Day School Faculty Participation in Professional Enrichment

This edition of the *Press* features a small cross-section of the professional development work undertaken since 2010 by our faculty and staff. Below is a more extensive listing of some of the topics our faculty, staff, and administrators have explored in conference, workshop, and other settings. It is not, nor is it meant to be, a comprehensive list. Rather, by listing just the titles of these activities, we hope to indicate the scope and breadth of the learning we undertake to sustain an exceptional professional culture and enhance the teaching and learning environment at St. Patrick's, through classes workshops, conferences, training sessions, presentations, and discussion groups. Sponsoring organizations are listed in italics.

American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance
Annual Conference

American Choral Directors Association
National Convention

American Orff-Schulwerk Association
Middle Atlantic Chapter Convention

American Red Cross
Red Cross First Aid and CPR

Association of Independent Maryland and D.C. Schools (AIMS)
Executive Function for Teachers
Heads Conference
Raising Standards of Writing Through Making Books
Target Bullying: Assessment and Intervention Workshop
Technology and Teaching
Technology Retreat

Audacia: Education for Every Girl Everywhere
Global Forum for Girls Education

Beauvoir School/Cathy Fosnot
Developing a Landscape of Learning: Early Number Sense
Fostering Children's Mathematical Development

Capitol Choices
21st-Century Libraries

Carnegie Institute and Society of Developmental Biology Science Outreach Program
Training Workshop

Center for Spiritual and Ethical Education
Religious Pluralism in Our Schools

Central and East European Schools Association
Fostering Independence in Lower Primary Students K-2
Integrating Brain, Mind, and Heart: Intelligences for Engaged, Enhanced Learning
Introduction to Six Writing Traits

Civil War Washington Teacher Fellows
Summer Institute

Dr. William Stixrud
Neuropsychology of Memory

Eastern Educational Resource Collaborative
Becoming Skilled Multicultural Educators
Searching for Inclusion, Middle School Diversity Conference

Georgetown Day School
Equity Collaborative

Harvard University
Project Zero

Heinemann Professional Development
Developing Curriculum for Writing Workshop

Horizons Greater Washington
Horizons National Conference

Independent Education (formerly Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington)
Annual Heads Conference: Education Without Borders
The Flat World and Education:
How America's Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future

The Medical, Educational, and Legal Consequences
of Sports-Related Concussions

Johns Hopkins University
Environmental Science and Policy: Master's Degree

Lab School of Washington
Neuroscience Update: Executive Functions and the Relationship to Dyslexia

Maryland State Reading Association
Annual Conference

Mid-Atlantic Episcopal Schools Association (MAESA)
Early Childhood Workshop
The Story of Me: Creating a Self-Portrait

National Art Education Association
Annual Conference
Meaningful Integration: Connecting Art and Classroom Learning
What Should All Students Learn by 8th Grade?
Developing a Flexible Art Curriculum

National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES)
Biennial Conference
Taize Worship in Middle and Secondary Schools

National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS)
Annual Conference
People of Color Conference

National Council of Teachers of English
Dancing the Technology Tango: English Teachers, Tech Coordinators,
and Students Learning Together

National Gallery of Art
The Cultures of Thinking

National Science Teachers Association
National Conference

Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
Annual Conference

Responsive Classroom
Responsive Classroom Summer Program

Smithsonian Institution
Art and Writing Workshop

St. John's Episcopal Preschool Summer Institute
Light and Shadow
Promoting the Strong Image of the Child

St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School
Handwriting Without Tears
Early Numeracy

Staff Development for Educators
National Conference on Differentiated Learning

Teachers College at Columbia University
Reading and Writing Project

Trinity Washington University
Early Childhood Education: Master's Degree

University of Virginia
Reading Education: Master's Degree



ALUMNI CLASS NOTES

Class of 1981 Reunion

The **Class of 1981** held their 30-year reunion in October. Attendees pictured in the photo above include (back row, left to right) **Christopher Dudley, Elizabeth “Liz” Regan Kiingi, Corinne Hauser Tardio**, (middle row, left to right) **Danielle and David Cogar, Bradley Meeker, Robert Simon, Atousa Kazemian Ghoreichi, William “Willy” Hoffman Jr., Parisa Kazemian Karaahmetoglu**, (front row, left to right) **Alexandra Murphy, Tammy Adle Stone, and Amin Khadduri**.

Alumni Cocktail Party

Thank you to Carolyn Ince Mansfield ‘80 and husband Anthony Mansfield for kindly hosting an alumni cocktail party on October 27. More than 70 members of graduating classes between 1976 and 2001 as well as several current and former faculty members were in attendance. Photos from this event are placed throughout the Class Notes section. See you next time!



The Right Fit: A Conversation with Raquel Skinner

Three years ago, as we embarked on our search for the ideal school for our two children, Ainsley and Alastair, we carefully reflected on what would constitute the “right fit” for both of them. Needless to say, helping our children maximize their intellectual and academic potential was at the top of our wish list. Of equal importance to us, however, was assuring they would learn to use such abilities and education for the betterment of society and do so with humility, poise, and grace. We dreamed of a school where Ainsley and Alastair would receive an outstanding education while growing into conscientious and community-minded individuals.

St. Patrick’s is where Ainsley and Alastair—now in 1B and PK2, respectively—are receiving an excellent education, but it is also a place where they are imbued with a wonderful sense of community. Tiny but precious examples of their burgeoning awareness of the importance of community service abound. This past Christmas, while receiving gifts of new toys, our children asked us to donate toys they had outgrown to less fortunate children. More recently, they expressed irrepressible excitement about the prospect of having to prepare food items for the school’s Grate Patrol, which our daughter enthusiastically described to her brother as “giving food to homeless people who don’t have anything to eat.”

This is our third year as part of the St. Patrick’s family. If someone were to ask us why we chose St. Patrick’s, the answer would be simple. We wanted a school where our children would learn not just about the wonders of the world, but also the wonders of the human heart and spirit. We are proud and thankful to say that, in St. Patrick’s, we found exactly what we wished for, and more!

Photo: *Raquel Skinner, left, with her husband Darren, daughter Ainsley 1B, and son Alastair PK2.*



St. Patrick's
EPISCOPAL DAY SCHOOL

4700 Whitehaven Parkway, NW
Washington, DC 20007
www.stpatsdc.org

Our Mission

St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School strives to create a diverse learning community of students, teachers, and parents who recognize the infinite value of every participant as a child of God. We are committed to developing character, advancing human understanding, and promoting academic excellence in our students in order to prepare them to live with integrity, compassion, and purpose.



*St. Patrick's is on Facebook!
Please follow us.*

SAVE THE DATE

Children of Uganda: Tour of Light Music and Dance Performance

Tuesday, January 24, 7:00 pm

Parents Visiting Day, K to Grade 6

Friday, February 10

Auction Patron Party

Saturday, February 11, 7:00 pm

Nursery School Parents Visiting Day

Friday, February 24

Did you receive our video Christmas card by email?

If not, please contact Charisse Noche in the Development Office at nochec@stpatsdc.org so we can add your email address to our mailing list.

Expansion Planning Community Forum

Tuesday, January 31

6:00 pm

Great Hall, St. Patrick's

*Join us for a conversation about our new athletic field,
future Foxhall Campus development, and the growth of
the Day School's physical education and athletics program.*