

FEATURES: Reaching beyond limits | The teaching and healing power of the arts | We need all girls schools
| Senior Seminar: preparation for college and life | Upcoming events

**Saint
Mary's
SCHOOL**

You've got this.

Headlines

Reaching beyond limits

By Brendan J. O'Shea, Head of School

When is the last time you participated in something that pushed you out of your personal comfort zone? Way out of your comfort zone? While it is never easy, expanding one's boundaries and exceeding perceived expectations builds confidence, prepares you for future challenges, and motivates you to succeed. At Saint Mary's, we encourage girls to do just that.

Participation in the arts – performing and visual – is one way we help girls to think outside the box and stretch themselves. Whether it is performing on stage or working behind the scenes designing sets and running lights; whether it is creating a painting, a graphic design or taking a photograph; whether it is singing acapella or playing in a string ensemble, Saint Mary's offers a safe environment where students can step outside of their comfort zone, take risks, and gain confidence in their creative voice.

When I see students performing and creating, I am reminded of one of the 10 key competencies we want our students to develop: self-expression. Participation in the arts clearly encourages self-expression. Through creative endeavors, girls find new and inspired

ways to articulate what they are learning about themselves and the world around them. While not every student gets a lead role, a featured dance, a coveted solo; and not every girl has the most acclaimed portfolio or

gets to be crew head for the show, at Saint Mary's there is room for every girl to participate – and that means every girl has the opportunity to push her boundaries, find her voice, and do more than she ever imagined possible.

Of course, participating in the arts is just one of the ways girls are empowered at Saint Mary's. Girls challenge themselves daily as they participate in the classroom, on a sports team, in a new club, as a prefect or student leader. The key is being willing to take that first step and participate. Saint Mary's has so much to offer – in the

arts and in all aspects of school life. One of the most important qualities a girl can bring to Saint Mary's is the will to participate. With that in her back pocket, a girl will find the possibilities are limitless!

The key is being willing to take that first step and participate.

Saint Mary's has so much to offer – in the arts and in all aspects of school life.



How we design learning

The teaching and healing power of the arts

By Laura J. Novia, Director of Marketing and Communications

Saint Mary's School has long known the teaching and healing power of the arts in preparing girls for college and life. That is why the school offers a robust arts curriculum, comprised of choral, dance, instrumental, theatre, and visual arts classes, that is integrated into the regular academic day. That is also why the school's Visual and Performing Arts (VPA) department offers additional activities after school to provide students with relevant experiences, opportunities to try something new, and a break from the rigors of the academic day. In keeping with Saint Mary's initiative to leverage our Raleigh location, these activities also employ the talents of local artists and experts in and around Raleigh.

After school: partnering with local talent

This year, the VPA will mount three theatrical productions, rather than the usual two: a fall play (*Decision Height*), a winter musical (*Mary Poppins*), and a spring performance of *Princess Talks*, a play with a message of women's

empowerment by local playwright and Actors Comedy Lab co-founder Nancy Rich. Each production allows girls to audition for onstage roles or participate in technical theatre activities. While cast members rehearse on stage with Saint Mary's expert faculty, technical theatre students participate in an after-school "class" where they learn from local professionals about costume design, set building, sound, lighting, and more. What the girls learn, on and off stage during these after-school activities, is directly applied to their work on the show – making for both a meaningful learning experience and an authentically student-driven production.

A documentary filmmaking class is also part of the after-school arts offerings this trimester. Working with local filmmaker Cole Russing, a professor in Duke University's Art of the Moving Image department, students are creating a documentary on the making of Saint Mary's production of *Mary Poppins* to be screened for the Saint Mary's community in February.

**The arts are
alive and well
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Seminar: health and wellness through dance

Beyond the after-school offerings, Saint Mary's also utilizes local performing artists in other parts of its program – for instance the artist-in-residence program with Black Box Dance Theatre (BBDT), a Raleigh-based company with “expertise in making dance relevant, inspirational, and natural for all bodies and persons.”



Led by Artistic Director and Saint Mary's Adjunct Dance Instructor Michelle Pearson, BBDT works as “a catalyst for meaningful human interactions, powerful storytelling, and transformative art.” The BBDT company conducts healing arts programs for the USO of North Carolina, recently led Cultural Democracy trips to China and Kazakhstan for the U.S. State Department, and at Saint Mary's, BBDT engages with students as part of the Seminar Program's health and wellness module.

9th Grade Seminar

In the fall, 9th graders worked with BBDT to explore the importance of support systems in our lives. Inspired by the personal story of a Purple Heart veteran who shared his story with the girls, students choreographed and performed duets and group dances reflecting their own personal stories and struggles. Through this process they gained experience asking, accepting, and giving support.

11th Grade Seminar

During Seminar's second quarter, 11th graders explored integrity, intention, and inclusion through dance. They practiced deep listening, reflected on personal awareness, and engaged either with students from Dynamic Opportunities (a school for uniquely-abled students) or with service men and women from the USO's Warrior Reset project, to deepen their understanding of what it means to act with integrity and intention, and be part of a truly inclusive community. High energy dance and creative connectivity were employed to communicate and signify students' learning and personal experiences.

10th Grade Seminar

Later this year, the 10th grade will work with BBDT on wellness and body intelligence. Using wellness wheels, body maps, and core value discernment, students will use dance to learn how to “listen” to their bodies and get in touch with their individual health and wellness needs.

The arts are alive and well at Saint Mary's School. The possibilities are endless.

We need all-girls schools

Excerpted from *Why Girls' Schools Are More Relevant Than Ever*

When *Forbes* released its 2019 list of the 100 Most Innovative Leaders, a roster of influential, creative, forward-thinking executives, it included just one woman. The internet and the business world erupted in response, criticizing *Forbes* for its glaring oversight and demanding accountability. A group of 174 female CEOs even signed an open letter to *Forbes* written by journalist Dianna Kapp, calling for the magazine to “overhaul the criteria that determines who makes the cut.”

“Who makes the cut.”

Women receive the message they don't “make the cut” as early as elementary school, where research shows boys dominate classroom discussions, are perceived to be better in math and science, and are given more attention than girls. Many times, traditional curricula even erase the numerous important roles women have played in shaping history.

In an era where women still fight for gender equity and female CEOs still struggle to be recognized, we need places where girls are wholly seen and heard; where discussion of the endless possibilities for girls and women today is in the air the girls breathe. Places where young women are not only told they are capable of anything, but where they literally can see themselves filling every role, are more relevant today than ever before.

We need all-girls schools.

Here are a few reasons why:

1. Girls' schools inspire leadership (and more female leadership benefits us all).

Girls' schools engender confidence and agency, and in no other educational setting do girls have the leadership opportunities they have at a girls' school.

2. Girls' schools build self-confidence.

At girls' schools, girls are asked only to be who they are. They are given a place to grow unrestrained and become fully themselves, explore their voice, and become comfortable in their own skin.

3. Girls' schools are innovators (and create innovators!).

From leading the way in closing the gender gap in STEM subjects, incorporating social-emotional learning into curricula, and championing female athletes and girls' sports teams, girls' schools are always thinking beyond what is currently accepted to what could be.

The message those 174 female CEOs delivered in their letter to *Forbes* is the same idea that women in male-dominated industries have been proclaiming for decades—**when females are empowered, everyone wins!** We see this concept come to life every day in our classrooms, when students raise their hands to share their opinions unprompted and without fear, and confidently step into leadership roles for the competitive rocketry team, varsity soccer, or the cast of the spring musical. They—our students—are innovators already. Surrounding them with the encouragement and the environment they need to thrive as young women teaches them what they are capable of so that down the road, if they encounter someone telling them they can't “make the cut,” they will have the tools to know exactly how to push back.

Elizabeth J. McGregor, NCGS Trustee and Head of School, Westridge School

Source: [https://www.ncgs.org/advocacy/blog/2019/](https://www.ncgs.org/advocacy/blog/2019/12/18/why-girls-schools-are-more-relevant-than-ever/)

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Scan here for full article

Learning where we live

Senior Seminar: preparation for college and life

This year's senior Seminar Program kicked off in the fall with "all things" college. Students worked regularly with Saint Mary's college counselors to navigate the college application process. To date, the Class of 2020 has applied to over 200 different colleges and universities across the U.S. and the world. Most college decisions will be released by April and we know our seniors will have many options to consider. About 20% of the senior class has already decided where they will matriculate following rolling, early action, and early decision acceptances.

Seniors now focus on the capstone projects or internships they have chosen for the remainder of the year. These allow the girls to take a deeper dive into areas of personal interest. Some of the capstone essentials questions being explored include: How does mental stress hurt our bodies? How do you conduct a choral ensemble? How do learning spaces and styles influence a student's success? How does color theory affect how people view art and perceive emotions?

The internships in which seniors are participating are as varied as the girls themselves and include experiences with public relations and marketing firms, legal offices and law enforcement organizations, online and store-front retailers, schools and special education programs, theatre and dance, social services, hospitals, and churches.

Events

See online calendar at sms.edu for details



FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY 1-4

Winter Break

FEBRUARY 4

Dorms open 2 p.m.

FEBRUARY 5

Classes resume

FEBRUARY 7

Re-enrollment emailed to families

FEBRUARY 12

Winter Student Recital

FEBRUARY 21

Re-enrollment due

Winter Musical: *Mary Poppins*

FEBRUARY 22

Winter Musical: *Mary Poppins*

FEBRUARY 28

Granddaughters Club Luncheon

FEBRUARY 29

Dance Marathon benefiting
Duke Children's Hospital &
Children's Miracle Network

MARCH

MARCH 6-9

Saint Mary's "Big City" arts tour in NYC

MARCH 8

Chorale performance at
Carnegie Hall, NYC

MARCH 12

Winter Sports Assembly
Alumnae career event
with upper classwomen

MARCH 13

Early dismissal | 12:30 p.m.
Dorms close | 5 p.m.
Spring Break begins

MARCH 14-22

Spring Break

MARCH 22

Dorms reopen | 2 p.m.

MARCH 23

Classes resume

MARCH 31

Smedes Parlor Concert Series

APRIL

APRIL 10

Easter Friday | No classes, offices closed

APRIL 13

Easter Monday | No classes, offices
closed

APRIL 17

Grandparents & Grandfriends Day

Scan here for information about
Commencement 2020 and click on the
Commencement 2020 tab.



Saint
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SCHOOL

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