

SAINT MARY'S SCHOOL

Alumnae Profile Series

by Chelsea Ward '09

Sarah Anne Hamilton '11

**Farmer, Copeland Springs Farm and Kitchen
Pittsboro, N.C.**

Goldfish, Peanut Butter, and Crackers

Sarah Anne Hamilton '11 was born and raised in Beaufort, N.C., and found her way to Saint Mary's through her own personal research. Sarah's main focus was finding a school with a college preparatory program. That's when she came across Saint Mary's School.

"I didn't know anyone before applying to Saint Mary's," she explains. "I asked my aunt to help me with the application, and then I spoke to my parents about it."

As a Saint Mary's student, Sarah Anne was interested in a wide variety of courses and subjects ranging from foreign language to the arts.

"I enjoyed Professor Karsten Tyson's Spanish class and Teresa Assenzo's art class. Even today, I've remained close with Teresa," she says and smiles. "I loved Saint Mary's because I could talk with our teachers and understand how to have conversations with those higher up. It's an important skill in the real world."

Sarah Anne also enjoyed spending time participating in extra-curricular activities, specifically sports and the arts. Throughout her time at Saint Mary's, she played on the volleyball and softball teams, and she served as a member of the National Art Honor Society.

Yet some of her most favorite memories include advisory time with Dr. Steven Esthimer. "Along with the other Saint Mary's girls in my advisory group, we enjoyed spending time together. And we loved eating the variety of snacks, like goldfish, peanut butter, and crackers – all before assembly or Chapel! I just loved spending time with my advisory and Dr. E. It was always a nice break during the day."

Putting the Farm in "Farm to Table"

After Saint Mary's, Sarah Anne attended Sewanee, for two years before deciding to move back to North Carolina. Once back in her home state, Sarah Anne continued her love of the arts, taking several classes at University of North Carolina Greensboro (UNCG) where she graduated with a studio arts degree.

Sarah Anne spent nearly two years after college as a personal assistant and quickly found she had a different calling. "I decided to go back to school for sustainable agriculture," she explains.

While pursuing her second degree, Sarah Anne did on-site farm management for Dinner Bell Farm in Snow Camp, N.C., for a year. That August, she connected with Copeland Springs Farm, which was located in Pittsboro, N.C.



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This year, Sarah Anne will work on the farm and in their restaurant. At the restaurant, the menu is updated monthly based on the season's harvest.

"All the food is very seasonal and based on the peak of harvesting," she says.

Another component of farming that Sarah Anne is proud of is that many more women are going into the farming industry. "

More and more, there is a growing trend of women owning and operating farms throughout the country," she explains. "There's definitely a spike of women-owned farms now."

At Copeland Springs, sustainability is a primary practice and focusing on regenerative farming, which is a no-till method for soil sustainment.

Currently, Sarah Anne is renovating a farm in Siler City, N.C., and is hoping to put a flower farm on the land. "On my farm, I want to focus on sustainable flowers because the flowers we purchase at the grocery have a huge impact on the soil and environmental resources," she says.

The Importance of Staying Connected

Sarah Anne is grateful to the alumnae network for guidance, as she's beginning her new business venture.

"It's been so useful having a network of people with a wonderful connection to Saint Mary's," she says. "While writing our business plan for the floral farm, I reached out to Margaret McGlohon '81C, who was able to provide me with many different alumnae contacts."

If you ask Sarah Anne what her advice is for current Saint Mary's girls, she says she hopes that every student enjoys their time at school, "Because four years goes by very quickly."

She also says it's essential to "always stay connected to your alma mater and be in touch with other alumnae. There are any number of women doing any number of things, and we have a force with Saint Mary's," she says.

Sarah Anne is a real example of how hard work can help lead one down the road to success. We are genuinely grateful to Sarah Anne for her work at Copeland Farms in providing produce to all, especially during COVID-19.

Saint Mary's alumnae like Sarah Anne Hamilton '11 graduate with the skills, knowledge, and integrity they need for success. Whether furthering their education, pursuing professional careers, raising their families, or leading as volunteers, our alumnae are agents for positive change in their communities. Sarah Anne's story demonstrates the ability Saint Mary's women have to do big things in their lives, and we're thrilled to share her story.

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