

# Community & Equity

## 2019–2020 IMPACT REPORT

*St. Mark's School seeks to cultivate a safe and generative environment for each community member. Understanding the various cultures represented in our student body is an essential part of a St. Mark's education, and we intend to provide students with a superior education in a community of students, parents, faculty, and staff that represents a variety of racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Community and Equity Affairs (C&E), and the programs it offers through the school year, helps St. Mark's ensure it carries out this mission.*

## COMMUNITY & EQUITY SERVES AS COMMON THREAD THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR

Former Community and Equity Director, Loris Adams, and Associate Director of C&E, Starry Zhu, organized several all-School activities, commencing with the Pathways orientation program. Orientation introduces the concept of affinity groups and opportunities to engage in C&E work. Through affinity group leaders and the offices of C&E, Global Citizenship, Dean of Students, and Counseling Services students get to know each other and the School, and focus on topics like identity and culture, building community, academic success strategies, self-advocacy, and entering a culture different from one's own.

Dr. John Daves became the new Director of Community and Equity Affairs in the Fall of 2020. He will work with Starry Zhu in promoting community and equity through the St. Mark's community, and oversee the 2020–2021 antiracist action plan.



Welome, Dr. John Daves!

## PATHWAYS PROGRAM FLOURISHES

The PATHWAYS program promotes awareness around cultural difference and provides affinity opportunities for students whose social or identity needs may not be reflected in the dominant culture at St. Mark's. This program is the umbrella under which all student affinity groups are housed. During the last four years the number of affinity groups has grown from five to 13. In addition to four Pathways Prefects, who lead all affinity groups and serve as the student voice for C&E, each group has its own student leaders who organize meetings and activities through the year. Pathways groups include:

- ASIAN STUDENT ALLIANCE
- BLACK LIVES UNION
- BRILLIANT
- CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP GROUP
- GENDER & SEXUALITY ALLIANCE
- J-TEAM
- LOS LEONES
- MEN ARE NOT BORN; THEY'RE MADE
- NATIVE AMERICAN ANCESTRY
- #OPENLYSECULAR
- SOUTHBOROUGH SOCIETY
- STUDENT WITH INTER-RACIAL LIVES
- WSAR (White Students Against Racism)

## ST. MARK'S PATHWAYS

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVITY  
OF THE GROUPS IN 2019–2020:

**262**

MEMBERS

**220**

ALLIES

**90+**

MEETING & EVENTS

**40%**

OF STUDENTS ARE  
ACTIVE MEMBERS!





## 12 ST. MARKERS ATTENDED **NAIS** PEOPLE OF COLOR AND STUDENT DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

### C&E SUPPORTS DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY EVENTS

In December 2019, six faculty and six students attended the NAIS People of Color Conference and Student Diversity Leadership Conference, a multiracial, multicultural gathering of upper school student leaders from across the U.S. The event focused on self-reflecting, forming allies, building community, and developing effective cross-cultural communication skills and strategies for social justice.

Throughout the year, students and faculty also attended:

- **SOCIAL JUSTICE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE** at Phillips Andover – 4 students
- **ADVANCED SOCIAL JUSTICE INSTITUTE** at Concord Academy – 2 students
- **AIISNE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OF COLOR CONFERENCE** (virtual) – 2 students led workshops and several students participated online
- **NATIONAL DIVERSITY PRACTITIONERS INSTITUTE** – 5 faculty
- **AIISNE DIVERSITY CONFERENCE** – 2 faculty
- **AIISNE ONLINE WORKSHOP:** “Election 2020: Creating Environments for Civil Discourse and Dialogues Across Differences” – Associate Director of C&E, Starry Zhu attended

### COMMUNITY AND EQUITY DAYS CELEBRATE DIVERSITY, IDENTITY, AND INCLUSION

In January 2020, a three-day, all-School C&E program began with St. Markers sharing their culture with the School community through food, music, videos, photos, and other forms of expression. More than 40 students planned and organized the highly attended event, which featured 15 tables hosted by Pathways groups. St. Mark’s Haiti Partnership invited Jean Pillard, founder of Life Skills Haiti, to present on the work his organization is doing in Fort-Liberté and Cap-Haïtien to support and empower Haitian youth. The HBO film “True Justice: Bryan Stevenson’s Fight for Equality,” about Alabama public interest attorney Bryan Stevenson, founder and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative, was also shown.

The following day, the Global Youth Leadership Institute facilitated workshops focusing on gender and leadership, cultural identity, mindfulness, and climate change and diversity, equity, and inclusion. The institute builds democratic and socially just communities through access to and experience of multiple perspective and narratives, and delivers programs that help students and teachers become fully engaged citizens of the world.

Later that afternoon, Pathways groups led a “Celebration of Identity,” by sharing their ethnic, religious, gender, and social cultures through presentations, song, dance, video, poetry, and more.



TO LEARN MORE VISIT: [WWW.STMARKSSCHOOL.ORG/EQUITY](http://WWW.STMARKSSCHOOL.ORG/EQUITY)