

SADDLE RIVER DAY SCHOOL

Bulletin FALL 2020 and Annual Report

We are
Ready
for whatever comes next



Message from
the Head of School

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Distinguished Alum
Allen Popowitz

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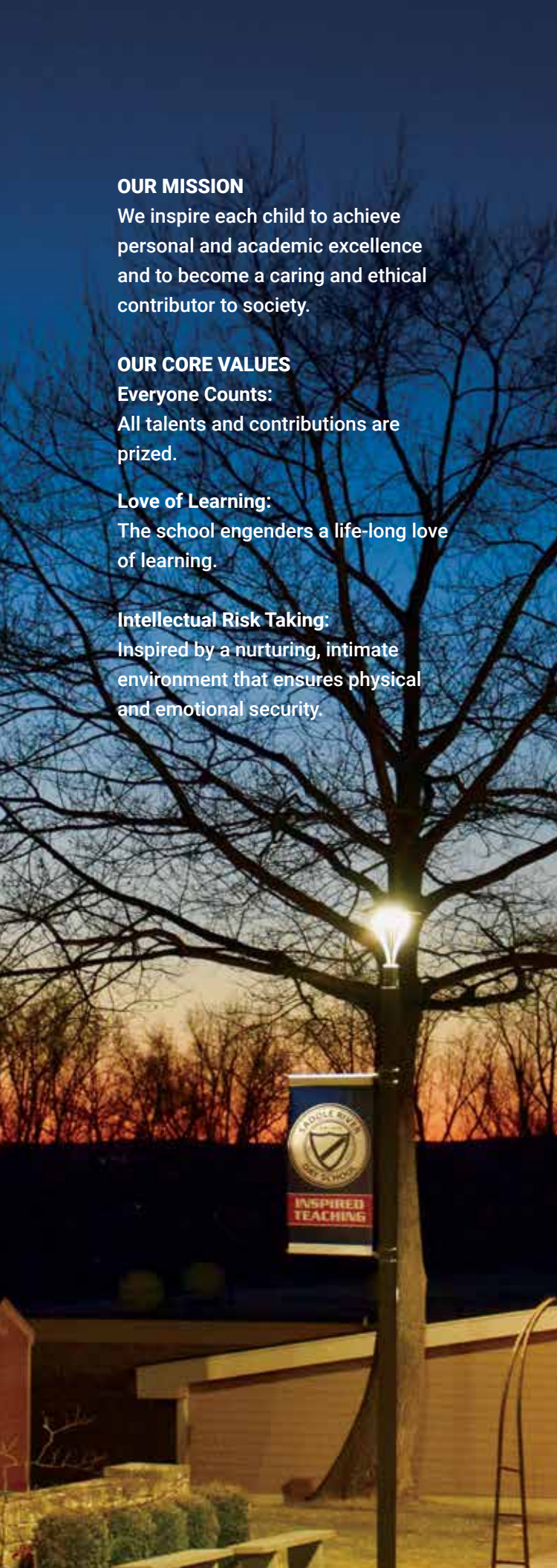
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OUR MISSION

We inspire each child to achieve personal and academic excellence and to become a caring and ethical contributor to society.

OUR CORE VALUES

Everyone Counts:

All talents and contributions are prized.

Love of Learning:

The school engenders a life-long love of learning.

Intellectual Risk Taking:

Inspired by a nurturing, intimate environment that ensures physical and emotional security.

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SRDS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Trustees of Saddle River Day School provide commitment and leadership for the advancement of the School's mission, vision, and growth, as well as the preservation of the School's rich legacy.

In partnership with the Head of School, the Board of Trustees oversees and ensures all legal obligations are met and works to build a strong endowment by supporting annual fundraising and capital campaigns. The Board plays a vital role in guiding Saddle River Day School forward and ensuring that the institution is run with the utmost professionalism, while remaining at the forefront of educational and technological development.

The Board is comprised of parents, alumni, and community members with a deep affection, affiliation, and commitment to the school. They are highly skilled in their outside professions and bring a wealth of knowledge and experience that allows them to work together toward the best interests of the school.

CREDITS:

- Editor-In-Chief: Gretchen Lee Kuhlman
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We are Ready for Whatever Comes Next

Jalaj Desai, Head of School

What a year this has been! Beginning with the significant changes to the SRDS Administrative Team — including my appointment as the permanent Head of School amidst the COVID-19 global pandemic — to the challenges of reopening our school on time in a safe and secure manner, we have experienced more in the last nine months than others have in a lifetime. And yet, we remain resilient and optimistic.

Saddle River Day School pivoted to remote learning on March 24th, the first day “back” from spring break. With the decision being made on March 17th, the administration and faculty had literally one week to prepare and train for this transition. For the faculty of a school — an institution integral to normalcy for many families in our community and country — to manage the safety and health of their own households during a crisis while still teaching online with care and empathy each day is a feat that shouldn’t be understated. Students look to their teachers as role models and a genuine litmus test for an eventual return to normalcy. At a time when home life could be the most chaotic, it was more important than ever to show true empathy and compassion. Children often perceive and digest the emotional and behavioral state of their surroundings, and school is such a large part of their world. Therefore, it is all the more critical to reflect on our duties as positive role models. I am grateful for each and every one who went (and continues to go) so far above and beyond during this unprecedented time.



As we forge on into the fall, we will most definitely face new obstacles, navigating a year that may be just as unpredictable as the last.

As we move through the next phases toward recovery, it is important to know that our time is now as the nation needs educators who will reinforce a young population with knowledge, critical thinking, and citizenry to prevent the worst going forward. The part we will now play — whether in person or remote — will serve us well in the long run to keep our community happy, safe, and informed. Although we have proven our adaptability to novel circumstances, we hope that it need not be tested again. As we forge



on into the fall, we will most definitely face new obstacles, navigating a year that may be just as unpredictable as the last. However, what makes this time different is the very simple fact that we are now well prepared. Going forward will not be easy. Dealing with the new campus format, pivoting back and forth from virtual to in-person learning is a daunting prospect,



but if done the right way, we hope to not only endure, but enjoy and learn from the “new way.” It is our creativity and talent as educators that will set us apart as an institution. We have embodied our mission: the deep “love of learning” runs through our blood and when combined with a culture that promotes “intellectual risk taking,” we can provide our students an experience surpassing other institutions in creativity, safety, and outcome. As overstated or cliché as it may be, we, like many others, are doing our best to veer our ship away from the countless obstacles, so it genuinely means something when it is said that “everyone counts.” We are educators for a reason, and to all our faculty, staff and families, I want to

We will continue to be adaptable and resilient in handling education through the most turbulent time in recent American history for we truly are “ready for whatever comes next.”

greatly commend your efforts in handling a spring semester that forced us to quickly adapt and keep our classrooms operating smoothly. We will continue to be adaptable and resilient in handling education through the most turbulent time in recent American history for we truly are “ready for whatever comes next.” 🙏



A Unique and Special Celebration:

SRDS Graduates the Class of 2020



On Thursday, July 23rd, Charter Field was the site of the in-person Graduation events for the Saddle River Day School Class of 2020. Due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, these celebrations looked very different than in past years, but remained as festive as ever. Administrators, faculty, and staff were committed to making an in-person celebration for students and their families happen as allowed by the State of New Jersey. The day began with graduation rehearsal and was followed by a celebration of student accomplishments at the Senior Awards Ceremony.

In the evening, seniors and their families attended a ceremony where graduating students sat with a limited number of family members in the audience instead of on the dais. They listened to speeches given by Head of the Upper School Tony Maccarella, classmates Jordan Janowski and Stephen Savas, and Head of School Jalaj Desai, all with the theme of “resiliency” and enjoyed time all together on campus as a class. While attendees wore masks and maintained physical distance from one another, it was wonderful to be able to spend time together and officially close the year for our students.

Congratulations to the Class of 2020! 🎓

Our Tribute to the Class of 2020



The following awards were given to the members of the Senior Class during the Senior Awards Ceremony:

Lifers



Emma Kim Victoria Miller

2020 Departmental Academic Awards

- English Award of Excellence
Jordan Janowski
- Mathematics Award of Excellence
Stephen Savas
- Science Award of Excellence
Emma Kim and **Danielle Rizzuto**
- World Language Award of Excellence
Sophia McMahon
- History and Social Sciences Award of Excellence
Victoria Miller
- Visual Arts Award of Excellence
Vanessa Viglucci and **Shiyao Sheila Wu**
- Performing Arts Award of Excellence
Danielle Rizzuto

- SRDS Scholar Award
Stephen Savas
- Head of School Award
Dylan Strober
- Upper School Citizenship Cup
Jordan Janowski
- SRDS Humanitarian Award
Stephen Savas
- Jeremy L Glick Freedom Award
Dylan Besserer
- Outstanding Improvement
Sophia McMahon
- Male & Female Athletes
Dylan Besserer and **Sophia McMahon**

Head of School’s Honor Roll
Julia Haber, Jordan Hungreder, Ethan Kahn, Leo Kong, Sara Martos, Danielle Rizzuto, Stephen Savas, Kassidy Todisco, Maggie Woods, Shiyao Sheila Wu

Class of 2020

College Destinations

The Class of 2020 was accepted to a list of schools as varied and accomplished as they are. The strength of college guidance at SRDS is in the care and attention given to each student and family. At SRDS, our families receive expert college guidance that gives our students an advantage in the college admissions process. Over 100 colleges and universities visit SRDS each fall, and many of the best schools in the country admit our students because they know an SRDS grad is an inspired learner who is confident, creative and accomplished. Over 40% of our students enrolled at a first-choice college through Early Decision or Early Action, and 5 of our seniors were recruited athletes enrolling in colleges such as Stanford University and New York University.

Congratulations to the Class of 2020!

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY	PROVIDENCE COLLEGE
BATES COLLEGE	QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY (2)
BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY	RADFORD UNIVERSITY
BOSTON UNIVERSITY	RANDOLPH-MACON COLLEGE
COLLEGE OF THE HOLY CROSS	RUTGERS UNIVERSITY-NEW BRUNSWICK
DREW UNIVERSITY	SAVANNAH COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN
DREXEL UNIVERSITY	STANFORD UNIVERSITY
EMERSON COLLEGE	SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
FIDM-FASHION INSTITUTE OF DESIGN & MERCHANDISING-LA	THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
HAMILTON COLLEGE	UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA-BERKELEY
LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY	UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY MARYLAND	UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN
MARIST COLLEGE	UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME
MOUNT SAINT MARY COLLEGE	UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
MUHLENBERG COLLEGE	UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY (4)	UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY (2)	WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY	
PACE UNIVERSITY-NEW YORK	
PARSONS SCHOOL OF DESIGN	
PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY	



BELIEVE. Believe in yourself — when life gives you a curveball, like coronavirus, you’ll get through it. Believe in your family — they’ll always be there to help you, even when you insist that you don’t need it. Believe in your friends — they will always be eager to support you in good times and bad. Believe in your dreams — in the words of Eleanor Roosevelt, “the future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”

LEARN FROM FAILURE. Sometimes you swing and miss when those curveballs come your way. But when you miss, there’s an opportunity to improve. Many failures lie ahead of us, but we must learn from them to be successful. As Michael Jordan once said, “I fail so I can succeed.”

BE A “REBEL.” Being a “rebel” means having the courage to think differently, like any great scientist, entrepreneur, or artist who has left their mark. Being a rebel sometimes means doing simple things that have great impact, like walking onto a baseball field, but your name is Jackie Robinson. Being a rebel means standing up for what you believe is right; if you see someone being mistreated because they look different, do something about it.

Stephen Savas



I’m sure we can all agree this wasn’t the ending we expected or deserved, but it’s a great life lesson in learning how to handle things that don’t go as planned. These past few months have had its ups and downs, but we still managed to keep our community closely-knit. A community is a group of people who share something in common; it is a tangible entity. It is a place where everyone has each other’s best interests at heart and a place that will be there for us, no matter what comes our way. What the SRDS community has given us is a platform; a platform where we have made friends for life; a platform that allowed us to learn from wise teachers, that allowed us to grow and expand on the life lessons we have learned here. This year, the biggest lesson we have all learned is to never take time for granted. We’ve learned that at any time, life can take a turn, so it is up to us to make the most of every moment. As we move on to the next step in our lives, we should remember to always try to live in the moment.

Jordan Janowski

NCAA Division I Sports

Class of 2020 Athletes to Continue at the NCAA Collegiate Level

Saddle River Day School was the Bergen County per capita leader again in students who committed to continue their athletic careers at the collegiate level. The school celebrated the occasion before a gathering of family and friends last Fall.

Sara Martos
Notre Dame University
Fighting Irish fencing



Sara Martos joined SRDS as a Senior when she relocated from California. Sara began fencing early in her childhood and quickly became a force to be reckoned with due to her dedication and strong work ethic. She was a member of the elite Massialas Foundation Mteam Fencing organization and competed at high levels both nationally and internationally such as the *USA Fencing North American Group Cadet Women’s Foil Gold Medal* competitions. Sara will continue her incredible fencing career in college at Notre Dame University.

Sophia McMahon
Stanford University
Cardinals lacrosse



Sophia McMahon played soccer and lacrosse during her high school years at SRDS. She was a member of the 2017 and 2018 lacrosse teams that

won the *Non-Public B State Sectional Championships*. Due to COVID-19, the team unfortunately did not have a lacrosse season.. However, for the first time in nearly 20 years, the women’s soccer team won the *NJSIAA Non-Public North B Championship* by defeating Montclair Kimberley Academy in a thrilling penalty kick shootout (3-1 PK’s). She is the youngest of four siblings to graduate from SRDS: Izzy ’14 (USC Trojans lacrosse), Daniella ’16 (Stanford Cardinals lacrosse), Michaela ’18 (UPenn lacrosse). Sophia will continue her stellar lacrosse career in college at Stanford University.

Jordan Petersen
Radford University
Highlander lacrosse



Jordan Peterson joined SRDS as a sophomore. She played soccer and lacrosse during her high school years at SRDS. She was a member of the 2017 and 2018 lacrosse teams that won the *Non-Public B State Sectional Championships*. She was also a member of the women’s soccer team that won the *NJSIAA Non-Public North B Championship* by defeating Montclair Kimberley Academy in a thrilling penalty kick shootout (3-1 PK’s). Jordan will continue her successful lacrosse career in college at Radford University.



At Saddle River Day School, our definition of “success” is not just about winning, but competing with passion and taking pride in our accomplishments while developing important life skills along the way. As a school, we ensure that we remain vigilant in the pursuit of this definition of success and stay true to our mission. Congratulations to all four of these outstanding young women!

Jordan Janowski
New York University
Violets basketball



Jordan Janowski joined SRDS as a sophomore and had an immediate impact on the elite Rebel womens varsity basketball program as a fierce competitor and relentless defender. She was a member of the 2018, 2019 and 2020 teams that won the *Bergen County Championship* (2020 made it a 5-peat for the Rebels) and the *Non-Public B State Championships* (3-peat). Due to COVID-19, the team was unable to compete in the Tournament of Champions as it was canceled. Jordan will continue her successful basketball career in college at New York University where she plans to study medicine.

Distinguished Alumnus

Allen Popowitz '88
 Leading the Way in the Fight Against ALS



Allen Popowitz is a recognized leader in the real estate industry. He is a savvy attorney who has been with Brach Eichler LLC for 25 years where he serves as Chair of Brach Eichler’s Real Estate Practice. His practice approach and excellent work ethic distinguishes him in his field. Allen credits the foundation for that work ethic to his days at SRDS.

Allen began his time at SRDS in September, 1982 as a 7th grader. In Upper School, he thrived academically and quickly became involved in the life of the school, particularly in athletics alongside his two brothers, Glenn '86 and Richard '90.



In Upper School, he thrived academically and quickly became involved in the life of the school, particularly in athletics alongside his two brothers, Glenn '86 and Richard '90.



He was a key contributing member of a highly successful soccer program that traveled to the U.K., as well as the basketball and baseball teams. As a side note, he was drafted by the New York Yankees at the end of his senior year 1988 in the 50th Round (12 rounds before Mike Piazza!) Instead, he went on to Princeton University, graduating in 1992, and then attended the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law where he graduated in 1995.

But despite these and many other worthy accomplishments, including a selection by his peers for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America 2017*, he is the most proud of his work as the *Chairman of the ALS Association of Greater New York* where he

When his mother-in-law was diagnosed with ALS in 2010 and it was discovered there was a familial, genetic form of the disease, he asked how he could get involved to help find a cure.

has worked tirelessly in pursuit of a cure for this deadly disease. When his mother-in-law was diagnosed with ALS in 2010 and it was discovered there was a familial, genetic form of the disease, he asked how he could get involved to help find a cure.

He joined the Board of Directors of *The ALS Association Greater New York Chapter* in 2010.

Since joining the Board, Allen has been directly responsible for raising millions of dollars in crucial funding which has allowed the Chapter to grow its patient-centric programs exponentially. He has led the Chapter to partner with premier institutions that are leaders in the field, and the funding provided has changed the landscape of ALS research in the Greater New York area. Allen and his family continue to lead the charge to find effective treatments and a cure for this devastating disease and to help pave the way toward a world without ALS.

Allen and his family continue to lead the charge to find effective treatments and a cure for this devastating disease and to help pave the way toward a world without ALS.

He remembers his time at SRDS fondly. “I learned a great deal about hard work and leadership from Coach Joe Augienello. I also found that the teachers at the school prepared me well for the challenges of an Ivy League University. To this day, some of my best memories are from my time spent at SRDS and the friends that helped to shape me into the person I am today.”

Allen and his wife, Emily were married in July, 2005 and have three boys: Jonathan who just joined the SRDS family as a member of the Class of 2025, Noah (10) and Maxwell (8).



We are pleased to present the 2020 Distinguished Alumni Award to Allen in recognition of his work. He truly represents the SRDS Mission to “achieve personal and academic excellence and to become a caring and ethical contributor to society.”

“To this day, some of my best memories are from my time spent at SRDS and the friends that helped to shape me into the person I am today.”

A Celebration of the Arts



Jenn “Jorge” Nelson ’85

Jenn “Jorge” Nelson is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University with a BFA in painting. She made the transition to makeup in the early 90’s. In 2012, Jenn won the coveted *New York Women in Film and Television Award*, where she was presented with the award by Tina Fey, who said at the time: “I found her not only to be very, very good at what she does, but just a joy to be around, which is really important with a makeup artist because often times they’re the first person you see in the morning and the last person you see at wrap, and there’s just no room for crazy there.” Her extensive credits include: 30 Rock, the iconic Allstate Mayhem campaign, *FBI*, *SVU*, *Friends From College*, and *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*. Most notably, she is the personal makeup artist to Tina Fey and has worked with her on her last 5 movies. Jenn is elated to be back with Tina this Fall on her new comedy series *Girls5Eva*.

Jenn says, “I can 100% attribute becoming a successful makeup artist to one woman: Anne Garriss who was my art teacher at SRDS. Many will remember her wearing wool knee socks and running across the campus like she was always late. She was wildly eccentric and I was attracted to her unconventionality. She saw something in me I didn’t see in myself. She inspired me and guided me towards the RISD summer program, which helped me to get into Carnegie Mellon as a painter and sculptor. The transition to makeup took a while. I was working as a director at various art galleries and when one of the galleries was rented to shoot a movie, I saw this world, was totally intrigued and decided to give it a try. I quickly realized with my knowledge of color theory and my Gemini spirit (always needing adventure and change and my ability to get along with anyone) it was a natural choice! I hope to inspire students to look into the many jobs in the entertainment industry!”



Schandra Singh ’95

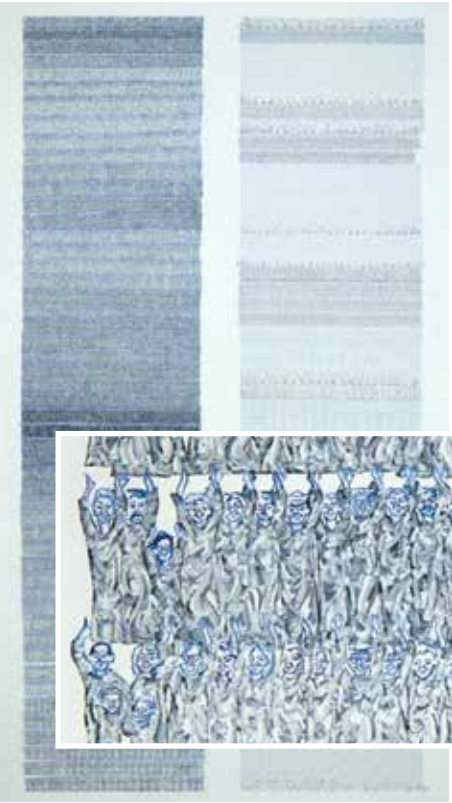
Schandra Singh is a painter who received her BFA from Rhode Island School of Design and MFA from Yale University. Stylised and satirical,

her oil works use the methods of pop expressionism and miniature painting to talk about the human condition and to express the absurdity of social notions of rest at a time of incredible unrest.

Schandra was living just south of the World Trade Center on 9/11 and her harrowing experience that day led her to produce one of her most personally significant works captioned “Untitled” that

painstakingly depicts every person who died that day. Most of them are smiling, their arms raised, carefully grouped with the family members they died with that day, some holding their children. The piece still sits in her apartment in New York, where she says, “Visitors are welcome to find their loved ones whenever they want.” She has shown her work all over the world including New York, Paris, London, India, Switzerland, China and Berlin and has been published in *New York Magazine* and *Vogue Magazine*. She has also done interviews with *The Economist* and *NPR* and just illustrated her first children’s book entitled *The Story of Us*.

Schandra credits her love of art to her SRDS art teachers, like Anne Garriss who



exposed her to artists like Matisse, Egon Schiele and Picasso. Ms. Garriss inspired her to “think outside the box” and to have the confidence to express controversy in her art, a principle that has guided her throughout the years in a highly successful career. In addition, Alice Steinke “was able to provide structure around the creativity; she could see where we needed help and really push us in the right direction.” Schandra fondly recalls her English teacher, Freda-Lee (Freda) Hubler as well, who was able to help her experience “the connection between emotion and writing; ideas were just as important to her as grammar.”



Grace Pak ’05

With a Bachelor of Fine Arts from New York University and a Master of Science in Neuroscience and Education

from Columbia University, Grace has always explored various ways to bridge the gap between art and science, experimenting with art forms focusing on phenomenology, the study of consciousness as part of first-hand experiences. She co-founded *Duchess of Cameron* with her older sister Jen Pak ’03, specializing in high-end letterpress invitations and bespoke cakes. With formal training at the *International Culinary*

Center in NYC, earning the *Grand Diplôme with Distinction in Cake Techniques & Design*, she realized the positive aspects of cake decorating has on mental health, promoting creativity and insight in everyday life. She believes the experience of creating an art form that can physically be shared with others is one of the unique characteristics that makes cake decorating a powerful therapeutic tool. It was out of this belief that she founded the *NY Cake Design Lab* where international master cake artists are invited to come teach their unique cake decorating techniques to professional cake makers, hobby bakers, and first-timers. As a member of *Psi Chi — the International Honor Society of Psychology* — she also works closely with the NY Licensed Creative Arts Therapist organization to continually improve and develop the cognitive aspects of the cake decorating program. In addition, she was recently named at the *2019 New York Wedding Awards: Manhattan Cake Design of the Year*. Grace has also appeared on





the *Food Network* and her work has been featured in *Vanity Fair*, *House & Garden* and *The World of Interiors*. Grace will be appearing on Season 1 of the new Food Network show *Candy Land* premiering in November.

Grace says, “While SRDS helped prepare me for college and beyond in countless ways, two invaluable aspects immediately come to mind: training in leadership and concept formation via interdisciplinary measures. Through various leadership opportunities like being Student Council President (and who can forget Monday morning assemblies?!) and Captain

of the Varsity Volleyball team, SRDS promoted the natural cultivation of leadership elements. Public speaking skills, confidence, and decisiveness are some of the key components of leadership that were instilled in me via hands-on experiences during my time at SRDS that truly have been skills I needed to succeed. Another crucial aspect of leadership — creativity — was actualized by concept formation via interdisciplinary measures. I remember projects in English class requiring skill sets from my music class, or science and history classes bringing in components from my art class, and vice versa. The push to converge various

“SRDS trained me to think creatively, not only in the arts, but also in other areas of my life, including entrepreneurship and social change.”

disciplines to create a new train of thought, I believe, is one of SRDS’s strongest educational fortes. SRDS trained me to think creatively, not only in the arts, but also in other areas of my life, including entrepreneurship and social change.”

SRDS Celebrates the Class of 2014 with

Two Rebel Athletic Hall of Fame Inductees



Isabel “Izzy” McMahon ’14
Izzy McMahon came to SRDS from IHA for her Junior year and was the first of four sisters to graduate from SRDS

(Daniella ’16 – Stanford University ’20; Michaela ’18 – UPenn ’22; Sophia ’20 – Stanford ’24). The McMahon family laid the foundation for the success of women’s athletics at SRDS and helped shape the program, particularly basketball and lacrosse, into the highly competitive program it is today. Izzy was an elite athlete at IHA, but not really engaged in student life there; that quickly changed when she enrolled at SRDS. She played tennis, basketball and lacrosse, thrived academically and was an involved role model for others, on and off the field.

Izzy says, “The concept of being a role model really began at SRDS. Existing

in a student body where ages ranged from Kindergarten and up, I began to understand the true meaning of that responsibility, not only as an athlete but as a person. I recall hearing younger kids in the halls who knew my name and it made me aware of my actions. Life is not about the accolades and the recognition; it’s about how you treat people and the difference you can make in someone else’s life. Saddle River Day helped me to understand that the whole is always greater than the sum of its parts.”

She began her collegiate lacrosse career at West Point, but has since transferred to the University of Southern California where she has been a key component in USC’s NCAA DI Top 10 ranked program. She is earning her degree, majoring in health and human science, and minoring in occupational science. She will compete for one more season in the spring and will be graduating in May, 2021.



Christopher Cosgrove ’14
Chris Cosgrove started at SRDS his freshman year, where he was an Honors student, and a leader. He ran cross country, played basketball and baseball.

Chris helped his team qualify for the Bergen County Jamboree and to advance in the NJSIAA State Tournament further than the team ever had before. He helped pave the way toward establishing a program that recently experienced three undefeated league seasons (2017, 2019 and 2020) and continues to consistently advance in both the state and county tournaments.

Chris was awarded all-league honors multiple times and was recognized for his sportsmanship, receiving the coveted NJSIAA Sportsmanship Award. In addition, he was awarded the Jeremy L. Glick Freedom Award at graduation. He went on to a highly



successful collegiate career at Stevens Technical Institute where he received conference recognition and served as Team Captain, leading the team to three successful conference tournament appearances.

Chris reflects on his time at SRDS. “I have always felt that I was academically prepared for my classes in college, thanks to my time at SRDS. I was able to make the adjustment from high school to college work seamlessly, which was important with my demanding athletic schedule.”

Caring and Ethical Citizens:
SRDS Rebels Give Back

Operation Smile

Upper School student Avik Patel '22 organized the sale of special masks to raise funds for *Operation Smile*. The masks were created with a special logo and were on sale and all proceeds were donated to *Operation Smile*, an organization that has provided hundreds of thousands of safe surgeries for those born with cleft lip and cleft palate. As one of the largest medical volunteer-based nonprofits, *Operation Smile* has mobilized thousands of medical volunteers from a wide range of medical

specialties from more than 80 countries. *Operation Smile* engages public-private partnerships to advance health care delivery, train local medical professionals to provide surgical care for patients in their communities, donate crucial medical equipment and supplies, and increase access to surgical care so that everyone living with cleft is treated. For more information about *Operation Smile*: operationsmile.org



Technology for Sierra Leone

In recent years, SRDS has established a partnership with the *Childrens Foundation of Technology* and CEO/teacher Mendy Kanu in Sierra Leone. Mendy has helped to facilitate Skype sessions between SRDS students and his students to talk about the similarities and differences they experience in separate parts of the world. In an effort to help the school, which seriously lacks the resources amidst civil war, terrorism and natural disasters, the technology department, under the direction of Laura Hollis, organized a drive to collect technology donations from the SRDS community to be distributed in Sierra Leone. The donations included items such as Flipcams and chargers, laptops, iPhones and cases, Beats headphones, wireless keyboards, mini stylus pens, iPads, LG phones, camcorders with chargers, Wii game systems, and headsets with microphones. The donations were shipped overseas and were gratefully received by Mendy and his students.



Clothing and Shoe Drives Aid Those Impacted by Natural Disasters

The SRDS Student Council, led by advisor Susan Kim, organized a drive to collect gently worn shoes and summer clothing. The shoes were sent to the *Funds2Orgs* organization, who began their mission with a single shoe that washed ashore after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. Since then, *Funds2Orgs* has become one of the largest nonprofits in the United States,

helping people affected by some of the world's most significant natural disasters, including the Indian Ocean tsunami, Hurricane Katrina and the 2010 earthquake in Haiti and has shipped over 20 million pairs of shoes to people and places hurt by natural disasters. The clothing is still being collected and will be donated to a village in Ghana.



Pencils for Pula

New to SRDS for the 2020-2021 school year, 8th Grade student Straus Daniel spends much of his free time managing a program that he started called *Pencils for Pula*. During his 2020 spring break, he attended a school service trip to Botswana and South Africa. While in Botswana, he volunteered at the Galaletsang Primary School in Gaborone and saw groups of kids sharing one pencil. Ever since, Straus has thought of ways to change that. The mission of his organization is to donate pencils to every public school in Gaborone, Botswana to allow every student the opportunity to get an education and make an impact on the world. He and his team of volunteers collect pencils through promotional events in order to distribute them through a partnership with IMPACT Service Trips. To learn more about *Pencils for Pula*: pencilsforpula.com



Everyday Hero: Laura Hollis Offers Assistance in the Fight to Stop COVID-19

In between teaching, troubleshooting online learning and being a wife and mother to three sons, Director of Technology, Laura Hollis actively does whatever she can to help. One of these efforts occurred when she produced and delivered PPE to healthcare workers last spring. Middle school parent Beatrice Burgis had seen a news story about citizens with 3D printers using them to produce PPE and thought it would be a great initiative for SRDS to be a part of.

Ms. Hollis utilized her resources to identify some vendors where foam strips, elastic and plastic sheets for assembly could be ordered and found reliable directions for printing the visor parts and ear savers. She also identified a website that included links to register for those who were in need of shields. She registered on the production side and was matched up with several local doctors locally. Since no one was on campus for the remainder of the year, 3D printers and filament were transported from the SRDS campus to homes to help facilitate the production of the items. Laura, Niles Patel, Assoc. Director of Network Infrastructure and Joanne Ciuccio, Graphic Arts teacher, worked to 3D print the visors and ear savers. Some of the ear savers were custom-designed with the words "Love" and "Hope" or a heart design. Then with the help of the entire Hollis household, individual bags were assembled that included a face shield and ear savers with brief directions and a photo of how they should appear after assembly, gloves and a hand written note of appreciation including the special phrase, "Made with love." Other SRDS families and friends stepped up to help in the effort by donating time and resources as well.



The PPE was delivered to local area doctors, who expressed their deep gratitude. A box full of visor shields and ear savers were also hand delivered by Ms. Hollis to David Bohan, VP and Chief Development Officer at Valley Health Systems.

The SRDS mission statement says: "We inspire each child to achieve personal and academic excellence and to become a *caring and ethical contributor to society*." Our faculty continue to lead the way as they inspire students by their own personal examples. 🌟

SRDS Launches New Program:

Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

The Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE), under the direction of Science Department Chair Anastasia Kelly, was established to enhance the academic environment with meaningful projects and programs that encourage students to be “intellectual risk-takers” and “caring and ethical contributors to society.” CIE allows students to examine issues in the community and the world, and to see these issues as opportunities for innovation, design and entrepreneurship in a more project-based, student-centered learning environment.

The program also incorporates cross-divisional collaboration in the classroom and enhances popular applied learning courses and programs already in place such as Engineering and Design, Graphic Design, Digital Citizenship and Fluency, and Robotics.



At its outset, the center’s first year goals included:

Competitive design club: students competed in the *Odyssey of the Mind* regional design competition last February. SRDS entered two teams — one each from the Middle and Upper School divisions.

Team members developed skills such as critical thinking, creative problem solving and risk assessment as they worked together to take on this year’s challenges. Both of the teams placed: Middle School, Second Place and Upper School, First Place, qualifying them



to advance to the state competition that was scheduled to be held in April, 2020.

Sustainability program: 10th graders each spend a trimester discussing sustainability issues locally and globally. A student assembly program about the United Nations sustainability goals occurs throughout the year where students present to their peers.



Weekend and evening community innovation and design boot camps: families were invited to participate in community events that encourage team building and innovation. The initial launch was held October, 2019 and opened at full capacity. Since then, there have been three additional CIE boot camps including the most recent one that was held on October 3rd outdoors.



Internal and external entrepreneurship opportunities: we will continue to work to develop a database of mentors and speakers that we can reach out for opportunities that benefit our students. One such special guest speaker was international architect Hans Knutzen. SRDS also introduced the TREP\$ (enTREPreneur) program where 8th Grade students participated in this empowering entrepreneurship program, and with the help of the Rebel Leaders they learned how to launch a business. They were scheduled to present their business ideas at a TREP\$ marketplace in the spring.

Saddle River Day School continues to innovate and add programs that engage students and help prepare them for success in college and thrive in life.



Innovative Student Experiences @SRDS

Innovative experiences outside of the traditional classroom setting is one hallmark of an SRDS education where students often have the opportunity to “experience” concepts that are taught in the classroom in a practical, hands-on setting. These experiences enhance the overall learning process at SRDS and prepare our students for success in college and beyond.

Mini Courses Enhance 21st Century Skills
The second annual session of Mini Courses was offered for Upper School and expanded to offer students in grades 4-7 an opportunity to participate as well. These courses were designed to help students learn important skills such as creativity, critical thinking, research, collaboration, applied learning and public speaking. The courses were designed and taught by faculty, based on a student



poll conducted the previous year. The week-long courses offered a wide variety of topics for Upper School students including Molecular Gastronomy, Rebel Yell Protest Music, Publishing an Issue-Based Magazine, and Silk Screening. Middle School students engaged in course offerings such as Music Video Production, The Miraculous Undersea Garden of Groovy Vibes (in the style of M. Henri Matisse) and Viaggi Italia, just to

SRDS Robotics Program Continues to Thrive
The SRDS *RoboRebels* robotics program continued to compete in local competitions during the 2019-2020 school year. The team took part in the first official FTC SkyStone competition of the season on November 3, 2019, at Millburn High School. Nearly 30 local NJ teams were in attendance at the tournament.

During that tournament, the RoboRebels was the first team chosen by the winning school for a potential alliance! For a second year team to already be one of the top 10 teams at the competition was a true accomplishment, especially considering the competition was against teams that had been around for 10+ years.

In an alliance with Dwight-Englewood School, the team also scored the highest single-match point total of the day, 63 points! The SRDS robot (a.k.a. “Bob”) utilized its new design to better secure, transport, and ultimately help stack the power stones needed to gain points. The team was able to stack three stones on top of another, the first successful stacking of the season for the Rebels. The team observed best practices, met some new robotics friends, and nailed down strategies for future versions of the robot and successful planning techniques.

In addition, the *RoboRebels* competed in other tournaments including the Bergen County League Tournament where they won 2 out of 5 matches and ended the day ranked 11th overall. The coaches are



name a few. Students thoroughly enjoyed exploring these topics and a short respite from their traditional academic work. Mini courses will be offered again for the 2020-21 school year.

incredibly proud of the team and their growth and look forward to building upon this foundation toward additional successful seasons.



Remote Rebels Engage in Virtual Summer Courses
What do 49 high school students, 10 teachers, 63 credits, and Google Meet have in common? They were all part of the Saddle River Remote Summer academic program. After months locked inside with online classes, it may seem unlikely that anyone would want to go back to their laptops for the summer. But Saddle River

Remote Summer classes offered students an opportunity to earn high school credits and learn about exciting topics that aren’t offered during the regular school year. Students chose from among ten full-credit and non-credit courses, including everything from Honors Pre-Calculus to Cooking and Baking. All classes were conducted remotely over a 5-week period in July.

TEDxYouth@SRDS “VISION 2020” Students Present a Virtual Evening of Thought-Provoking Talks

We are all too used to hearing from experts, scribbling down what we are told is the ‘truth’ rather than actively questioning it. We are too used to accepting the facts we are told, about everything from the global state of affairs to how we ought to behave. It is important for students to actively question, to have a role in the conversation about issues integral to our community, and to make their voices heard. It is in this vein that we began TEDxYouth@SRDS five years ago. TED is a non-profit organization devoted to spreading ideas in the form of short, powerful talks given by some of the greatest thinkers, artists, scientists, and philanthropists whose ideas are worth spreading. TEDx is an international community built around those same principles, allowing local organizers to create their own TED-like events. In this way, TEDxYouth@SRDS provides a forum where students (and some other community members like teachers and alumni) can share their “ideas worth spreading.”

Due to the COVID-19 virus, this year’s event was produced and delivered virtually. Faculty advisors Laura Hollis, Director of Technology, and Verne Becker, Technology Integrator, continued to support and encourage students to move forward with the program, despite the challenges.



A wide range of topics included The Power of Social Enterprise presented by keynote speaker Lanna Nawa, Remembering the Past by faculty contributor Joe McMenamin, The Power of Balance by student co-organizer Cheyenne Haller ’22 and a brilliant talk by her counterpart Eli Weinger ’22 titled Right Now Your Vote Doesn’t Matter; Let’s Change That.

Cheyenne reflects on the 2020 TEDxYouth@SRDS event: “When COVID-19 closed down schools in the middle of March, we immediately knew that things were going to change. Together, we discussed the different options and many of us were set on cancelling this year’s event and picking up where we left off at school in September. We knew that there was a minimal chance of us getting back on campus by June in order to hold this event, and the seniors in the group were going to graduate before we could pull something together. Ms. Hollis motivated students to keep pushing forward, accept the situation, and brainstorm new ways to hold this event. Through a lot of discussion and weighing our options, we came to the conclusion that TEDxYouth@SRDS: 2020 VISION would be a YouTube Live event. Ordinarily, speakers would exercise their public speaking skills in the Performing Arts Center in front of the middle and upper school students and the faculty, supported by a handful of students



who volunteer to be crew members who work on lighting, sound, videography and visuals. Another group of students perform artistically in this event, usually reciting an original poem, performing an instrumental piece of music, singing a song, or playing the piano during the emcee’s dialogue. This year, speakers, artists and emcees all filmed their parts individually and a few crew members helped Ms. Hollis string it all together through seamless editing. Some of the speakers adjusted their talk to touch upon quarantine lifestyle and many had to make changes understanding that they were in front of a camera instead of their fellow classmates. Despite the numerous obstacles, the TEDxYouth@SRDS: 2020 VISION event aired successfully on Tuesday, July 28th and was received with rave reviews! We are extremely proud of this event and of all the people who put a great deal of work into it.”

It was an inspiring evening for everyone in attendance. 🙌

Faculty Spotlight

Getting to Know the Upper School Science Department

Mr. Michael Warrener

Joined SRDS Community: 2019
Degrees: B.S., Math & Physics, Union College; M.Sci. & M.Phil., Astronomy, Yale University
Upper School Physics and Geometry



How has your degree at Yale prepared you to teach at SRDS?

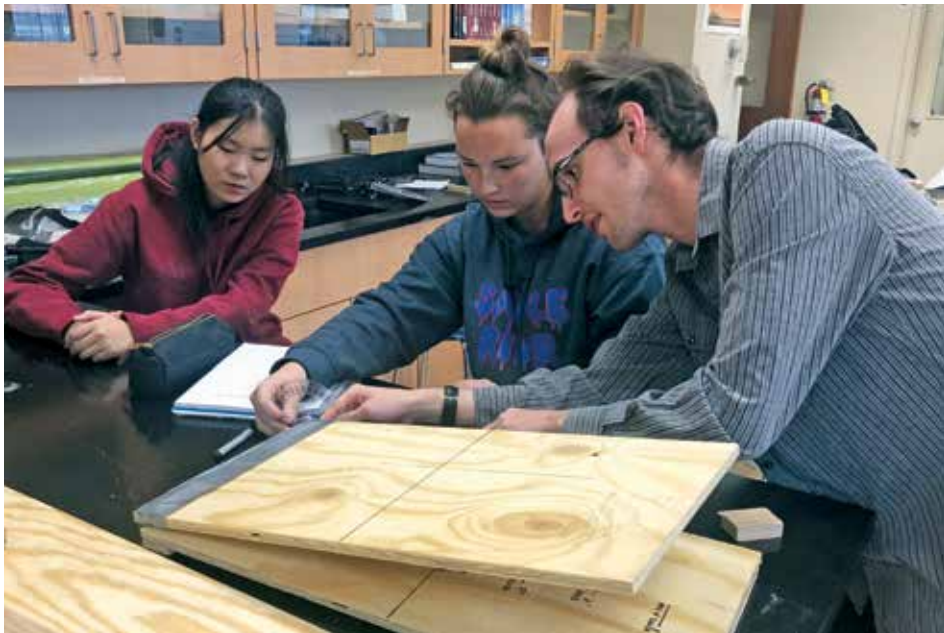
Yale has a history of training up future leaders of the world, and that definitely has shaped the way I approach teaching. The scientific and mathematical literacy gained by students who pass through my classroom will affect future business leaders, government employees, entrepreneurs, and scientists. It is my privilege to help inspire a love and respect for analytical thinking in each and every one of them.

What did you do your undergrad/graduate degrees research on, and why?

My research in undergraduate and graduate school covered everything from black holes to how galaxies evolved. To me, one of the most aesthetic aspects of astronomy is the structure of galaxies, so I loved exploring how grand design spiral galaxies formed and what caused them to change. The black hole project was born out of a simple question: where are all the black holes? We had an exciting new idea to look for them, and we ran with it in hopes of uncovering something brand new!

What do you love about teaching?

The “ah-ha” moment! I love guiding someone to understanding a concept they



thought too complex or too difficult to understand. When a student has their “ah-ha” moment, they see that they too can master difficult concepts. It is wonderful when you can help someone to enter into a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the world around them.

Why physics and math? What advice do you have for aspiring scientists and mathematicians?

I love the breadth of understanding imparted by physics and math. Knowing how rotation works allows you to understand everything from ferris wheels to the dynamics of planetary orbits. It is this versatility that is so appealing, and that is even more true for math! For anyone who finds that versatility as amazing as I do, I would tell them to remember why they love math and science

when the going gets tough. Understanding the rules and patterns of the universe can be hard sometimes, but it is so, so worth it when you get that tiny glimpse behind the curtain.

How does our curriculum and teaching at SRDS prepare students to succeed in college and beyond?

College is all about connecting the dots of your passions and exploring those passions deeply. SRDS encourages students to find their passions by participating in a variety of clubs, classes, and activities. SRDS also helps students to draw connections through the efforts of the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship as well as the Tech Department, who work to help teachers incorporate 21st-century skills and tools into the classroom. I cannot think of a better way to help prepare for college!

Dr. Vanessa Robinson

Joined SRDS Community: 2018
Degrees: B.A., Biochemistry & Molecular Biology; minor in Psychology, Boston Univ.; PhD., Cellular, Molecular, & Biomedical Studies, Columbia Univ.
Upper School Biology



What did you do your undergraduate/Ph.D. degrees research on, and why?

My undergraduate research was on Retinopathy of Prematurity, a retinal disease that can blind infants. I used fluorescence microscopy to study the structure of rat retinas with a similar disorder. The goal was to learn more about the development of the disease, but I also learned quite a bit about the challenges of starting a research project. For my Ph.D. work, I chose a much broader question: what is the function of sleep? Though we all understand that sleep is important for proper health, it still isn't known on a molecular level precisely what sleep does that is so important. Through my research, I found that sleep acts as an antioxidant for the brain, essentially clearing out harmful oxygen-containing chemicals that build up in our brain over the course of the day. So, the bottom line is: not getting your Z's is actually toxic to your brain.

Why did you want to go into teaching?

What do you love about being a teacher?

I've always had a passion for teaching, but one summer, I had a high school student volunteer in the lab. It was a challenge to teach her some of the more complicated concepts behind the research, but it was incredibly rewarding to see her light up when she mastered these concepts. This was when I realized that I'm well-suited for teaching high school students who have such an open mind. They haven't decided



on their life paths yet, so they are excited to explore new topics and are often amazed by the things that they learn. That's what I love most about teaching - the look of awe that you see when a student learns something incredible about themselves or about our world.

Why Biology? What advice do you have for aspiring scientists?

Nature is incredible, inspiring, and it affects all of us. We all contain a complicated system of tiny proteins constantly working to keep us alive. And each of us has an impact on our planet. It is so important for all students, regardless of their future aspirations, to learn about their bodies and how their actions affect our planet. For those students who are aspiring scientists, I encourage you to keep asking questions and never be discouraged by failure. Every failure teaches you something that brings you closer to your goal.

How does our curriculum and teaching at SRDS prepare students to succeed in college and beyond? Do you have any favorite

memories of your time at SRDS?

SRDS has a unique curriculum tailored by each teacher to provide students with the knowledge they need for the real world. In my classroom, we apply our knowledge to real-world situations so that students can understand the value of what they're learning. My students are also challenged to design, build, and create as part of a project-based learning model that allows students to direct their own learning. Taking an active role in their education now helps them to develop the critical thinking skills they will need to teach themselves in the future.

I love finding fun ways to teach topics that might otherwise come off as a bit dry or boring. I've used a bubble lab to teach about the properties of cell membranes. This year I tried a pickle autopsy to teach directional terms to my Anatomy & Physiology class. I planted tiny bullets, rubber band tapeworms, and even a pickle fetus for the students to discover during the autopsy. As a teacher, the fondest memories come from seeing your students enjoying the experience of learning. 🍷

Saddle River Day Introduces
Academic Gateway Diplomas Program

Saddle River Day School is proud to announce the launch of our Upper School *Gateway Diplomas Program*. Starting with the Class of 2023, students will have new opportunities for increased academic rigor and research in the Arts, Humanities and International Engagement, and in Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

Introduced to parents during a well-attended Zoom information session last spring, the idea for the *Gateway Diplomas Program* came out of a desire to grow in our core values: *Love of Learning and Intellectual Risk-Taking*. Head of School Jalaj Desai viewed this as an opportunity to differentiate the SRDS academic program: “We wanted to increase academic rigor by offering more challenges to our students,



as well as providing more applied learning opportunities that engage students with 21st-century real-life skills.”

Mr. Desai presented this vision to Karen Ferretti, Director of College Counseling, who conceived of the diplomas as a way to accomplish this vision while increasing the opportunities for SRDS students to stand out in the college application process. For Ms. Ferretti, the successful completion of a Gateway Diploma will provide our students with an advantage when applying to colleges:

“Now, more than ever, colleges are viewing their applicants through a holistic lens. Who a student is — character, leadership, clearly identified academic interests — all matter to colleges in a time when schools move further away from a strict GPA/standardized testing review. For a student that is doing this for the right reasons — increased rigor, broader experiences, more profound research opportunities, coordinated academics and extra-curricular — this program will give him/her a better story to tell college admissions offices.”



“Now, more than ever, colleges are viewing their applicants through a holistic lens. Who a student is — character, leadership, clearly identified academic interests — all matter to colleges in a time when schools move further away from a strict GPA/standardized testing review.”

The *Gateway Diplomas Program* is the culmination of months of research, study, and collaboration developed in consultation with the faculty, and approved by the Curriculum Council. The mission of the program is to “emphasize the exploration of individual, career-based interests through rigorous coursework and experiential learning, leading to a deeper understanding of the skills necessary for a successful college and career path.”

For further information, please visit saddleriverday.org/gatewaydiplomas

Pre-K 3's Program

Saddle River Day School is excited to announce the expansion of our Early Childhood Program with the addition of a Pre-K 3's class for the 2021-2022 school year. As the starting point for a child's journey at Saddle River Day School, this program is designed to meet the unique needs of young learners by fostering their social, emotional and academic development.

Our core values, *Everyone Counts, Love of Learning and Intellectual Risk-Taking* are the framework for the program, which focuses on fostering an early love of learning in a warm, nurturing environment. The developmentally appropriate curriculum takes into account the social, emotional and educational growth of each child; recognizing each as a unique individual, while encouraging collaborative learning. A low student to teacher ratio ensures each child receives the personal attention he or she needs to thrive. “It is my belief that positive early school experiences set the foundation for a lifelong love of learning,” says Chris Lebovits, Assistant Head of the Lower and Middle Schools, who also established the Pre-K 4 program in 2015. “When a child comes to school each day, excited to learn and engage in new experiences, it unleashes endless individual potential.”

Students in our program will spend each day engaged in meaningful experiences that build foundational academic and social skills. Everything that happens in and out of the classroom — from games



that encourage emergent language skills to nature walks around the campus — is

Everything that happens in and out of the classroom — from games that encourage emergent language skills to nature walks around the campus — is mindful of the specific needs of three year olds.

mindful of the specific needs of three year olds. As part of the SRDS community, Pre-K 3 students will participate in special area classes such as science in our state-of-the-art lab and art in our art studio designed specifically for our lower school learners, play on a playground “just their size” and explore a new language.

To learn more, visit us on the web: saddleriverday.org/earlychildhood



A Year Like None Other:

Saddle River Day School Steps Up During COVID-19

Remote Learning is a Virtual Success

“It’s the teachers that make the difference, not the classroom.”

Michael Morpurgo, author

In keeping with the New Jersey State mandate that all private and public schools remain closed indefinitely, SRDS understood the transition to remote learning became a necessity that needed to happen in a very short time frame. Under the leadership of newly appointed Head of School, Jalaj Desai, and the superb work of Technology Director, Laura Hollis and her team of Niles Patel and Verne Becker, this transition happened seamlessly and successfully. Remote learning officially began on Tuesday, March 24th.

Faculty and staff spent the second week of their spring “break” immersed in setting up their virtual classrooms, researching online teaching resources, and working tirelessly to ensure that remote instruction was easily accessible and clearly communicated for everyone involved so they would be ready to go on the 24th. Using the Google Meet platform, students followed the same schedule as they had when they were on campus to maintain some level of stability. In addition, the administrative team felt strongly that the ability to “see” and interact with classmates and teachers was important when students didn’t have the luxury of meeting their friends in person. Faculty and staff worked tirelessly to keep students and their families engaged by sharing videos



and upbeat messages with the community and hosting virtual events like the Annual Gala.

Parent feedback was incredibly positive. One parent wrote: “I have to say, the bar is set pretty high to begin with at SRDS. But you, the teachers, students and staff, just blew it out of the water!” Another wrote: “Giving our children a regular schedule, their virtual classroom, and the chance to all be together learning live was such a gift — not only for their education but also for their psyche.”

A good teacher is someone who gives their students and those around them something to think about other than

homework... someone who believes in their students and inspires them and others around them to be better... someone who goes above and beyond, even when they are not specifically asked to do so. During one of the most challenging times in our nation’s history, SRDS is so proud of its faculty and staff for the work they did to make the transition to remote learning as seamless as possible. We are also grateful to our families for the positive engagement and support they have shown during this stressful time. The SRDS community has bonded together in a way we have never experienced before. Rebel Pride is alive and well at Saddle River Day School!

Students Safely Return to Campus

After a summer spent in task force meetings, researching safety protocols and best practices, and carefully planning our return, SRDS opened its doors and welcomed students back onto campus for the first time since March.

As the faculty, administrators and staff began planning for reopening, the priority was not only to survive but to thrive in this difficult time. It was critical that the school maintain the expected level of academic rigor and excellence, that we continue to innovate in the ways we delivered instruction and that we construct a program that allowed for a nimble, seamless pivot to fully remote learning if that model once again became necessary (fingers crossed that it doesn’t). The challenge was to ensure that we served the diverse needs of our SRDS family. It was important that all students and their families felt welcomed, safe and supported, whether planning an in-person return to campus or a remote start, and to follow safety and health requirements set forth at the state and federal levels.

First, we stepped up our technology game. The school is now the proud owner of an upgraded, dedicated broadband line for the SRDS campus. This enabled our most impactful improvement, the installation of webcams, speakers and headsets for teachers. Students learning at home now have access to daily blended, synchronous learning that includes in-person and “live feed” instruction. In other words,




remote students have been integrated into the classroom in a way that delivers the same lessons and instruction to every student, regardless of location. Students that returned in-person might have had a hard time recognizing certain parts of our campus. Every classroom, common area, gathering space and passageway was evaluated and transformed as necessary to keep our students safe. But consideration was also given to how students would feel in these spaces. As often as possible, we tried to preserve the cheerfulness and warmth that have always made the SRDS campus feel like our students’ second home.

Then the moment arrived. The culmination of all the hard work and thought the SRDS family had poured into the plans for reopening came on Tuesday, September 1st, Orientation Day. Students arrived back on campus,

followed new drop off protocols, had their temperatures taken and then spent the day getting reacquainted with each other and briefed on the “new normal.” The first day of classes for grades PreK — 12 was on September 2nd. There were snafus and a few “lessons learned” but two months in, we can say that our full, Monday — Friday class schedule has become fully operational. We are grateful for our committed administration, faculty and staff who spent their summers educating themselves on technology, adjusting pedagogy and curriculum and keeping themselves healthy. In addition, our parents have encouraged, supported and trusted school leadership and our students have proven their capabilities through resilience, patience and an unflagging desire to make things better. Together we have persevered and learned what it means to thrive under difficult circumstances. 🌟

Visual Arts Goes Virtual

The visual arts at SRDS provide a means to gain personal satisfaction through individual accomplishment in the creation of images and forms. The program is solidly based on a respect and understanding of where students are creatively, what they require from their work, and the means to move them from one developmental stage to another as they become more expressive, inventive, and perceptive. Through creative experiences, students become familiar with facets of artistic thinking such as the ability to formulate problems and create multiple solutions, the ability to pursue a project over time, the willingness to solve problems inventively, the ability to take risks, and finally to reflect critically on one's own work. Students develop a way of thinking that functions beyond the studio into other areas of the curriculum. Each year, the Annual Art Show is the culmination of an entire year's work for SRDS in grades PreK-12. This year, the Art Show was held virtually due to COVID-19. 



The Curtain Rises on the Performing Arts

Songs for a New World
Upper School students performed the musical *Songs for a New World*, written and composed by Jason Robert Brown. The show is an abstract musical that includes a series of songs all connected by a common theme: the moment of decision. The show has four performers who do not literally play the same characters throughout the show, but who do have consistently developing character arcs nonetheless. Brown has said, “It’s about one moment. It’s about hitting the wall and having to make a choice, or take a stand, or turn around and go back.”

Because of its small cast and orchestra, *Songs for a New World* is a favorite small show for high schools, colleges and local theatres, despite its vocally demanding score. The show was directed by Tyler Capa, Deonté L. Warren (*Aladdin*), and Danielle Van Kampen.



Little Women Makes its Debut on the SRDS Stage
This classic show made its first appearance on the SRDS stage last February. Based on Louisa May Alcott’s classic 1868-69 semi-autobiographical two-volume novel, it focuses on the four March sisters — traditional Meg, wild, aspiring writer Jo, timid Beth and romantic Amy — and their beloved Marmee, at home in Concord, Massachusetts while their father is away serving as a Union Army chaplain during the Civil War. Intercut with the vignettes in which their lives unfold are several recreations of the melodramatic short stories Jo writes in her attic studio.



The musical version, with music by Jason Howland and lyrics by Mindi Dickstein, was superbly cast with principal roles performed by Liz Han ’21 (Jo), Danielle Rizzuto ’20 (Meg), Ema Eig ’21 (Amy), Joanna Ragukonis ’20 (Beth), Delia Davis ’21 (Marmee), Dylan Strober ’20 (Laurie) and Avery Traver ’21 (John Brooke) who did an outstanding job for three sold-out performances in the SRDS Performing Arts Center.

The SRDS Theatre Department is proud to present “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” for five outdoor performances on October 22nd, 23rd and 24th.



Broadway Comes to Saddle River Day
Now in his third year, Director Tyler Capa is still working his magic in the theatre department at SRDS! He is a highly accomplished pianist, arranger and writer of music and continues to headline in his own shows at Feinstein’s/54 Below with some of Broadway’s finest young talent including Celia Gooding (recently nominated for a Tony for her work in *Jagged Little Pill*), Anthony Sagaria (*Frozen & Wicked*), Gabe Gibbs (*Book of Mormon*) and more. In addition to his responsibilities at SRDS, Tyler is a thriving collaborative music content creator on social media and vocal coach to many of Broadway’s finest.

On Friday, October 2nd, Tyler invited some of these talented artists to the SRDS campus for a delightful evening of Broadway performances for a physically distanced, masked outdoor concert held in the courtyard. In addition to those listed above, others including Samantha



Pollino (*Hamilton*), Laurel Harris (*Jagged Little Pill & Wicked*), Anthony Chatmon (*Hadestown & Be More Chill*) Shereen Pimentel (*West Side Story*) also made appearances and Deonté L. Warren (*Aladdin*) made a guest appearance via satellite. Three SRDS students also shared their talent on the stage: Liz Han ’21, Natalie Janowski ’22 and Zoe Merola ’22. During a time when gatherings are difficult at best, this was a moment to come together and enjoy the shining talent of these outstanding performers under the stars. 🌟

Unfinished Business:

Rebels the BEST in NJ State?

Rebels win FIFTH consecutive Bergen County Championship and THIRD consecutive NJ State Title, but have no chance to finally prove they are the best



Long after the job was done on the floor and the upset was complete, Jordan Janowski ’20 walked to mid-court and accepted Saddle River Day’s fifth straight Bergen County

championship. The team’s lone senior lifted that title in the air and then hugged it tight throughout the postgame celebration.

Janowski dreamt of this moment for a year; she wasn’t letting go any time soon. Every time she heard the hype surrounding top-seeded Immaculate Heart, No. 3 in the NJ.com Top 20, this winter, Janowski used it as motivation; an extra source of energy on the way to the title game. No. 8 Saddle River Day came into the year as four-time defending champs, but felt like it needed to prove Bergen County was still under its control. On Sunday, February 23rd, the Rebels left no doubt in a 56-44 win. Saddle River Day (20-3) is now just the second Bergen County program to win five titles in a row, joining the Paramus Catholic dynasty from the 1970s.

“Immaculate Heart is a great team and they’re having a great year, but people underestimated what we could do. The culture carries on here,” said Janowski. “There were some jitters at the start with a lot of fresh faces in a scenario like this and we didn’t know what to do at first. Once we started running our tempo and playing our



game, we really built up that lead and they couldn’t come back.”

Immaculate Heart (21-2) scored back-to-back baskets to start. But then the wheels fell off. Saddle River Day used an 8-0 run to grab a hold on the game and led by 10 at halftime, with the lead ballooning up to 20 in the fourth. Every positive play by Immaculate Heart was met with an answer from Saddle River Day. The team is known for its defense and with players who were willing to buy in this year, Saddle River Day has drawn up several game plans that have challenged some of the best offenses in the state. No team in New Jersey forces more turnovers than Saddle River Day and that’s been a major advantage.

That’s why this team went from rebuilding to reloading faster than most people

expected. Last year’s four Division-I bound seniors were household names and made up a powerful offense. This season’s group makes up for its lack of well-known star power with its grit and hustle on the defensive end.

“That’s who we are. We focus on our defense,” said sophomore Saniah Caldwell ’22, the team’s only returning starter from 2019, who had four steals in the county final and a team-high 15 points. “We wanted to create a new identity and we’ve done that this year.”

Janowski and sophomore Cierra Pearson ’22 also got in on the defensive action, combining to come up with seven steals. That pair and Caldwell were the mainstays from last year’s team and in the biggest game of this winter, each one of them



stepped up and made plays to give Saddle River Day the momentum. The rest of the cast was on this stage at Ramapo College for the first time. By the end of the game, they all looked like seasoned vets. Pleasantville (NY) transfer Dakota Corey ’22 added 11 points for an offense that saw nine different players score. Hackensack transfer Kristina Mathurin and Tappan Zee (NY) transfer Alanis Diaz also made an impact along with freshmen newcomers Karly Fischer, Madison McCarthy and Mia Walsh.

Led by star guard Saniah Caldwell who scored 29 points, the Rebels went on to defeat Montclair Immaculate in the North Non-Public B state sectional game and won their third consecutive state championship, 66-50. However, due to COVID-19, they were not able to compete in the NJSIAA Tournament of Champions where they would have played the only other team to get the best of Immaculate Heart, Trenton Catholic (No. 2).

So the question still remains: will Saddle River Day be the best team in the state? Only time will tell. 🏆

Saddle River Day Boys Basketball Named NJIC Team of the Year



Last year Saddle River Day opened some eyes with, by far, the most successful season in the history of its boys basketball program. Built on a foundation of rock-solid defense and some

sharp three-point shooting, the season was highlighted by a run to the Bergen County Jamboree quarterfinals, where they lost to the eventual tournament winner, No. 1 seed, Ramsey High School. The Rebels continued their dominance in the NJIC Tournament where they took down Dwight-Englewood (77-64) and Paterson Charter (82-52) to repeat as champs. They have won 39 straight games over NJIC opponents. This year, the team posted its second straight season above .500 with a 22-4 final record. Leading the way were Connor Cyran ’20, who averaged 18.6 points per game and 9 rebounds per game, Sebastian Giannotti ’21 (13.3 ppg), and Richard Machado ’23 (11 ppg). This earned them the *NJIC Team of the Year* title.

In state play, the Rebels (No. 5 seed) defeated Morristown Beard (No. 12), 57-34 in the first round of the North Non-Public B tournament to advance, but lost in the quarterfinals to Hudson Catholic (No. 2).

The Rebels consistently played a balanced game that included a relentless defensive effort — a hallmark of the SRDS basketball program in general — and versatile, unselfish scoring. “We have to play up to our capability and teams are going to be gunning for us now. Everybody on our team is locked in, especially on defense,” said Cyran. “I think our being so interchangeable and having that versatility is our greatest strength. Anybody can guard anybody, one through five, and that is definitely something we try to take advantage of. Plus, with so many guys that can score on any given night, it’s important for us to work together and share the ball.”

“We’re trying to force the pace, play physical and fast, and make that our consistent plan, game in and game out. We want to catch our opponents off guard,” said Saddle River Day head coach Anthony Gallo. Apparently, the plan is working. 🏆



Girls Varsity Tennis:

Undefeated 16-0 Season & League Champs!



The Girls Varsity Tennis team posted an undefeated 16-0 record (first time since 2013) and emerged NJIC Patriot Division CHAMPS! The success certainly was a team-wide effort for the entire season with individual highlights including:

Chloe Wu '23: 14-2 (League); 18-4 (Overall); reached the semifinal round of the County Tournament; reached second round of States; named First Team All League Singles

Grace Magna '23: 14-2 (League); 15-4 (Overall); reached quarterfinal round of County Tournament

Susanna Bobbs '21: 16-0 (League); 17-2 (Overall); reached quarterfinal round of County Tournament.

Annie Magna '22 and Stefa Suprunova '21: 16-0 (League); 17-2 (Overall); reached the Quarterfinal Round of the County Tournament; named First Team All League Doubles

Emma Kim '20 and Zara Chuback '21: 16-0 (League); 17-2 (Overall); reached the Quarterfinal Round of the County Tournament; named Honorable Mention All League



Congratulations to **Connor Cyran '20** who will continue his basketball career at Mount St. Mary's College as a Mountaineer. Connor averaged 18.6 points per game and 9 rebounds per game

and reached the 1,000 point mark during his Senior year. He was a key player for the Rebels, who were named the *NJIC Team of the Year* in 2020.

Olwen "Ollie" Lavrich '20 will continue her lacrosse career at Randolph-Macon



Congratulations to Coaches Ken Alrutz, Amanda Bieglecki and the entire team on this amazing accomplishment!



College as a Yellow Jacket. Ollie was an Honors student, played volleyball (MVP in 2019) and was a key defensive player for the SRDS lacrosse teams that won the NJ State Sectional Championships in 2017 and 2018. 🏆

The Legacy of Lee Wilson

Personal legacy is the unique footprint we want to leave for our time on earth. Those who strive to create a positive legacy are driven by an urgent desire to find larger meaning in the story of their lives and in the process, create pathways that guide future generations.



Lee Wilson was a beloved faculty member and friend of the Saddle River (Country) Day School for many years. He began his teaching career at Boys School

in Nyack, NY, then went on to teach at Saddle River (Country) Day School in 1961 and remained at the school for 31 years until he retired in 1992. During his time at SR(C)DS, Lee taught history and math classes and coached multiple sports, including football (yes, there was a Saddle River Day football team!) basketball and baseball. He also served as the Athletic Director and remained an avid golf, football and baseball fan. Upon Lee's retirement, after many years of hard work and dedication, the school founded the *Lee A. Wilson Athletic Hall of Fame*. His son, Kevin says, "My father was very proud of being part of such a great culture and loved working with the kids in the classroom and on the field. The SR(C)DS

community was a large part of his life during and after his retirement."

"My father was very proud of being part of such a great culture and loved working with the kids in the classroom and on the field. The SR(C)DS community was a large part of his life during and after his retirement."

Kevin Wilson

In addition to raising five children of his own, Lee was a dedicated and beloved teacher, mentor and friend to his students and his peers and was never a stranger to campus activities for many years after he retired. He left a lasting impact on those he taught and coached during his 31 years at the school. Upon hearing of his passing, testimonials and remembrances from former students and peers poured in, even all these years later. "Lee was my basketball coach in 1971, 72, and 72. He was more



than a coach; he represented what SR(C)DS was all about. We remained friends for 50 years. At a reunion gathering only a few years ago, so many of his past athletes and students attended, a true testament to his influence on the SR(C)DS family," Peter Dulligan '73.

Lee sadly passed away on May 1, 2020 at the age of 90 from complications of COVID-19; he will be missed and remembered by all those whose lives he touched. The legacy of his time at Saddle River (Country) Day School will never be forgotten by those who knew him. 🕊️



Alumni Events

Brick House

Saddle River Day celebrated once again at the Alumni Reunion held at the Brick House in Wyckoff, NJ on Friday, October 9th. Alumni, their families and friends, along with SRDS faculty and staff gathered under the tent to celebrate six alum and their remarkable accomplishments since leaving the halls of SRDS. Although things “looked” a little different this year, the warmth and the bond that all in attendance shared as a part of this special community was palpable throughout the room.



Annual Young Alumni Panel

Young alumni joined SRDS students, faculty and staff on campus for this lively annual event. They joined Chef Mark for a bagel breakfast, followed by the chance to visit with former teachers and then headed to the Performing Arts Center to answer questions about life in college from current SRDS Upper School students.



In Memoriam:
Enrico “Ed” Van Sickell 1961- 2019

Ed Van Sickell was a highly respected and dedicated member of the Saddle River Day School community, where he served as an integral part of the maintenance department for 22 years. His strong work ethic, friendly personality, and obvious commitment to excellence earned him the respect and love of the entire SRDS community. Ed passed away on November 8, 2019 at the age of 58. He will always be remembered for his bright smile and warm greeting to everyone who came in contact with him.

Alumni Council Outing at Stumpy’s



- SRDS Alumni Council
- Jonathan R. Kuhlman '84 – President
- Amy Fisher '86 – Vice President
- Billie Singer '05 – Secretary
- Kimberly Moussavian '87 – Treasurer
- Chrissie Signore '87 –
- Director, Alumni & Special Events
- Gretchen Lee Kuhlman –
- Director of Communications
- Lynn McCormack – Director of Development
- Kathy Philipp – Faculty Representative
- Penny Makris Bullen '84 – Past Parent Coordinator
- John Azarian '78 – President Emeritus

- Council Members
- Mark Buchakjian '15
- Gaby Groh '12
- David Leffler '04
- Thomas Manzi '93
- Ryan Neumann '16
- Grace Pak '05
- Glenn Popowitz '86
- Michael Rosen '82
- Jill Rosker '11
- Anahita Sethi '16

Dear Friends,



On behalf of the SRDS Board of Trustees, I am delighted to report that the Saddle River Day Community is thriving despite the global pandemic, coupled with the political and civil unrest throughout the country. We sympathize with those who have suffered loss and hardship during these challenging times, and we stand committed to working together to ensure that Saddle River Day School continues to flourish long into the future.

I would like to extend a very sincere and heartfelt “Thank You” to Jalaj Desai and the entire team of faculty and staff for the heroic work they have done to open the school and provide a safe and compliant

environment for each student. Every member of the team has prioritized the needs of the community and selflessly accepted one challenge after another in order to keep the school open. We are grateful for the personal sacrifices each team member has made and reminded that these dedicated professionals are the single biggest competitive advantage we have as a school community.

“We have much to be thankful for as we prepare for the upcoming holiday season, and we are fortunate as a community to be faring so well during these times.”

We have much to be thankful for as we prepare for the upcoming holiday season, and we are fortunate as a community to be faring so well during these times. I

respectfully ask for your participation and generosity in support of the Annual Fund. Our donations are a key pillar of the school’s financial planning; your generosity will help to overcome the immediate financial needs we face as well as ensure the long-term stability of the institution. Please, if you are able, contribute to the Annual Fund, and help us further secure the legacy of Saddle River Day School. The future holds many unknowns, but rest assured that Jalaj, the Administrative Team, and the entire faculty and staff, remain fully committed to the community; they are ready — for whatever comes next.

Thank you again for your commitment and generosity.

John Haller
President, Board of Trustees

2019-2020 Annual Giving

This year’s report reflects restricted and unrestricted gifts made to SRDS between 7/1/19 and 6/30/20. The Office of Development has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this report. If we have made an error or omission please notify us at 201.327.4050, x1124 so that we can ammend our records.

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- The Hohn and Brandt Family



“With three children in three different school systems, I have to share with you that SRDS was ‘on it.’ You were the most prepared, the most structured and the most interactive. I have to say that out of all three I was most impressed by your actions and efforts!”

SRDS Parent





“We could not have asked for more —academically, socially, and emotionally. SRDS adapted quickly and created a program that really works. Thank you all!”

SRDS Parent

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“Our son is thrilled to be back on campus, connecting in person with his friends and teachers. Thank you all for bringing in-person learning back at SRDS. We are so proud to be a part of this community!”

SRDS Parent



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“We ask every member of the SRDS community to participate in annual giving. Your support of the annual fund gives us the flexibility to adapt to challenges we face today and in the future, and allows us to continue to deliver an exceptional education.”

Jalaj Desai, Head of School

Make your gift to the Annual Fund today!

To make a donation, please visit www.saddleriverday.org/giving, or call the Development Office at 201.327.4050, x1124.

A Philanthropic Heart

Remembering Larry Salameno

Lawrence Salameno was a highly respected member of the SRDS Board of Trustees and served as Board President and Trustee Emeritus. His dedication and generosity to SRDS was unsurpassed during his years of service to the school. He and his wife, Theresa truly exemplified what it means to be a part of the Saddle River Day School community.

Larry and Theresa Salameno have shown time and time again what it means to have an altruistic heart.

A true philanthropist gives out of a spirit of generosity, empathy, and compassion with the desire to promote the welfare of others. Larry and Theresa Salameno have shown time and time again what it means to have an altruistic heart. They have given tirelessly of their time and resources to numerous organizations such as The Valley Hospital and Oasis, and were named *Distinguished Citizens* by Ramapo College of New Jersey in 2007 and received honorary degrees in 2012. Their son, Charles was a graduate of SRDS in '05 and daughter Francesca taught at the school.

From hosting faculty luncheons and holiday gatherings in their home to supporting many philanthropic endeavors on campus, the Salameno family created a legacy and helped shape the special culture

of Saddle River Day School. Former faculty member and Head of the Upper School, Andrew Rork said, “Larry was a wonderful man who gave so much of himself to the people around him. He was a great benefactor to Saddle River Day and I will always be grateful for all he did for SRDS and for me personally.”

On February 23, 2020, Lawrence Salameno passed away at the age of 75. Part of our mission as a school is to create “*caring and ethical contributors to society*.” We only need to look at his legacy to understand

“Larry was a wonderful man who gave so much of himself to the people around him. He was a great benefactor to Saddle River Day and I will always be grateful for all he did for SRDS and for me personally.”

Andrew Rork, former faculty member and Head of the Upper School

what this truly means. We are profoundly grateful to Larry and his family for their lasting contributions to our school. 🙏





SADDLE RIVER DAY SCHOOL

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Saddle River, NJ 07458

201-327-4050

www.saddleriverday.org

