

ST. PATRICK'S *Press*



FALL/WINTER
2020-2021

Class of 2020 Commencement
COVID-19 Response at St. Patrick's
& Community Reflections
Intersection of Sustainability and
Social Justice at St. Patrick's

Alumni Profile



Kate Bohigian W'15 and HeyDay

Q CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT HOW YOU CAME UP WITH HEYDAY?

There is a national problem of stress and anxiety, especially among youth and teens. With stress coming from different outlets such as social media, school, extracurricular activities, and now a pandemic, I looked for a way to help ease some of that stress. I talked with people ranging from classmates and teachers to best-selling authors and psychologists to learn about the harms of stress and looked at anxiety-reduction strategies. I learned how much the power of human connection means, so I have developed a movement geared towards motivating people to connect with others.

to bread--and I started an almond butter business! (And my brother Steele W'17 loves trying out everything we make!) Keeping busy is what motivates me to work hard and get everything done.

Q WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM ST. PATRICK'S?

I have amazing memories from St. Patrick's, but I will never forget Mr. Lanphier's Grade 6 history class. He made every class interactive and interesting, but I will never forget the day we learned about Spartan warfare. Instead of lecturing us about the types of fighting, he gave us all circular sleds and noodles and we all became Spartan warriors. We "fought" all class and learned different Spartan strategies. I remember going home and reenacting it with my family of "warriors." St. Patrick's is full of wonderful teachers like this, and I'm privileged to have those experiences.

Q WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO SINCE YOUR TIME AT ST. PATRICK'S?

Since St. Patrick's, I have been a student at the Holton-Arms School, participating in activities from being the captain of my sports teams to running the mindfulness and Model UN clubs. I also love kayaking, hiking, and baking. During quarantine, my sister Caroline ex. '21 and I spent all of our time in the kitchen, as she was baking everything from donuts

Do you have an exciting, or otherwise interesting, life update to share with your fellow alumni in an upcoming issue of the *St. Patrick's Press*?

Share your story with Director of Alumni and Parent Programs Chris Bolger at BolgerC@stpatstdc.org!

ALUMNI CONNECTIONS

Now, more than ever, is a great time to keep in touch with the St. Patrick's alumni community!

Email Director of Alumni and Parent Programs Chris Bolger at BolgerC@stpatstdc.org if you're not receiving our periodic alumni newsletter, which contains updates on your fellow alumni and current life at St. Patrick's.

And make sure you connect with us on Social Media:

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[instagram.com/stpatwolfhounds/](https://www.instagram.com/stpatwolfhounds/)

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From Peter A. Barrett, Head of School

Grateful for the Responsibility

This Fall/Winter Edition of the *St. Patrick's Press* covers rather more ground than most editions, stretching back to the days before we would begin to experience the wide-ranging (and ongoing) impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, through an unusual and challenging Spring Trimester and the graduation of the remarkable and stalwart Class of 2020, and into the 2020–2021 school year. It is our intention, in this edition, to capture the Day School's movement through this difficult time, one that saw patience and resources tested, beloved traditions reimagined and strengthened, and lives both young and not-as-young still being shaped and enriched by the special place we call St. Patrick's.

Even as I write, early in the New Year, the Day School's trajectory for the balance of the 2020–2021 school year remains, in some important ways, unclear, as is true of most institutions. Our particular focus remains the health and safety of our students and their families, our faculty and staff, and the wider community, especially in the context of an ongoing surge in the coronavirus. It is that very uncertainty that has defined our shared lives dating back to March 2020, not only at St. Patrick's but well beyond our walls. Since we closed our campuses that month, we have worked to maintain as much certainty as possible during these uncertain times and to promote the kind of engagement, nourishment, continuity, and connection that have long characterized St. Patrick's.

On September 8, we reopened for children in the Nursery School and Kindergarten, added Grades 1 and 2 later that month, and then welcomed

back students in Grade 8 and, finally, students in Grades 3 to 7. During the fall and into the winter, about 85 percent of our students have been engaged in on-campus teaching and learning, with another 15 per cent continuing to participate in St. Patrick's Anywhere, Our Remote Learning Program. Smaller class sizes through strict cohorting, social distancing, mask-wearing, staggered arrivals and dismissals, new hygiene and maintenance protocols, improved ventilation, and regular testing have provided the multiple layers on which we have relied in order to remain a safe and healthy setting in which that on-campus teaching and learning could thrive. We are hopeful that these measures will continue to ensure that in-person teaching and learning will be available.

There are many aspects of the Day School that look quite different from how they looked even just a year ago: Some larger spaces subdivided to provide for the smaller learning cohorts, more plentiful educational technology in all classrooms to accommodate students learning remotely and special-subject teachers streaming lessons into homerooms, individual lunches served in those homerooms, and more separate desks rather than the tables on which we have relied to promote our brand of face-to-face and shoulder-to-shoulder teaching and learning.

Candidly, not all of those differences thrill us. The education of young people of the ages of those who call St. Patrick's their school-home thrives not on social distancing but on close engagement, face-to-face conversation, shared play, and growing collaboration as students strive to make meaning of the enthralling but often confusing

world around them. And there are no doubt more screens around—and, correspondingly, more screen time—than would normally make us comfortable.

Yet we are learning much about existing and emerging digital platforms that will have an impact well beyond the pandemic. And, even for a school that has long recognized the importance of being outdoors—and has provided ample resources to promote healthy outdoor activity—we have been reminded repeatedly of just how valuable outdoor learning can be. The new St. Patrick's Garden & Outdoor Learning Space, which opened in September and about which you can read in these pages, offers just one example of the resources we are now putting to effective use.

And what does thrill us is the opportunity to share these spaces, indoors and out, for on-campus teaching and learning once again with our St. Patrick's students. After a springtime of closed campuses, of silent buildings, the vibrant presence of our students, albeit it distanced and masked, along with our gifted—and, in the time of a pandemic, courageous—faculty and staff continues to remind us of the value of the work we have chosen to do. Our students' intelligence and verve crackle from individual desk to individual desk, from a social distance, and across screens in classrooms and living rooms. Nourishing here, in this place, the essential relationships on which deep engagement—and, importantly—deep learning are based has been and remains the work that schools need to be doing, especially now. We are grateful for that responsibility.

Maggie Donohoe '26 carries home a HoundPack, a regular delivery of supplies for each student to support learning and maintain joyful engagement with their peers. For more information, check out page 11.





How Sustainability and Social Justice Intersect at St. Patrick's

The Sustainability Program at St. Patrick's has grown in the past several years to become an even more important part of our shared lives here thanks to the hard work of a group of dedicated environmentalists, an Environmental Action Team composed of students, parents, faculty and staff, and members of the Board of Trustees. Director of Sustainability and early-childhood science teacher Sam Mason established this team as part of a larger effort to bring together members of our diverse community to have a positive impact on our Earth's natural environment.

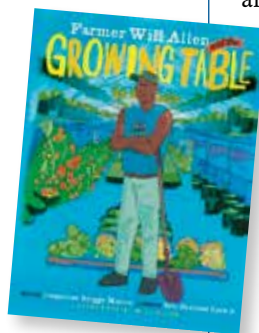
One of this group's first initiatives was to work towards an Eco-Schools USA certification. Together, we reduced consumption and waste, curbed energy use, and focused on sustainable food



and healthy living. Through this process, St. Patrick's first earned an Eco-Schools Bronze Award, followed by an Eco-Schools Silver Award shortly thereafter. St. Patrick's has become only the fifth school in Washington, D.C. to achieve this Silver Award and is well on its way to a Green Flag Award! This progress reflects our curriculum integration, community engagement, and best practices within

our facilities department. The enthusiasm and effort are evident throughout the school, including Grade 1's exciting farm-to-table unit, Grade 5's work with waste reduction, and our move to 100% LED lighting.

To engage students in Kindergarten to Grade 5 in discussions around farm-to-table sustainability, we chose *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table* as a Book-of-the-Month last spring. *Farmer Will* is the true story of a basketball-player-turned-farmer who begins a city farm in Milwaukee. Farmer Will "noticed that fresh vegetables were as scarce in the city as trout in the desert. He believed everyone, everywhere has a right to good food." The soil in the city was poor, so he turned garbage into compost with the



help of the neighborhood children who learned all about worms, particularly red wigglers. He made his life's work traveling around the country and world to show people how to be farmers in the city. Even a St. Patrick's Kindergarten class can understand environmental justice as the idea that everyone deserves to live on a clean Earth and start to understand that not everyone experiences the same environment.

The Environmental Action Team has been, and will continue to be, in communication with our own Faculty and Staff Equity Committee to ensure that we explore every possible opportunity to use the new Garden & Outdoor Learning Space to educate ourselves and our students about how we can help promote food justice. It is imperative at St. Patrick's that our students develop the skills necessary to be actively engaged and to thrive in an interconnected world, to understand other perspectives, to address bias, to oppose prejudice, and to promote justice. Environmental sustainability is an issue that affects us all, but the impact is greater, or more immediate, for those in poorer, underserved communities; those without the resources to mitigate the problems. Communities that face food injustice are those that suffer multiple systems of oppression, such as poverty, racism, and under-funded educational systems. When certain groups are being disproportionately affected by any issue, it becomes a civil rights issue. The rights for our planet need to also be rights for people. The interconnected world referenced in our Mission Statement for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion urges us to have these conversations around justice and sustainability in the same room at the same time.

The Equity Committee wants our students to be aware that injustice in our society and environmental concerns are, in fact, intersecting areas where socioeconomically and historically disadvantaged groups continue to suffer disproportionately. It is essential to consider sustainability as a subject that addresses multiple interconnected human issues such as racial justice, gender equality, distribution of wealth, food security, wellness, and service. Sustainability brings together quality-of-life issues including food and water, waste, overuse, individual and public health, and weather extremes, to name a few.

It is essential to consider sustainability as a subject that addresses multiple interconnected human issues such as racial justice, gender equality, distribution of wealth, food security, wellness, and service.



ST. PATRICK'S GARDEN & OUTDOOR LEARNING SPACE LAUNCHES

As reflected in our Sustainability Mission Statement, we strive “to shape engaged citizens who live with integrity, empathy, and purpose, in part by involving our community in the stewardship of the planet.” To that end, and as current circumstances made clear the importance of outdoor learning spaces, St. Patrick’s began work on a new outdoor space—the St. Patrick’s Garden & Outdoor Learning Space. The 3,750-square-foot space, located on our Foxhall Campus, consists of nine garden beds and space for several outdoor classrooms. The Garden & Outdoor Learning Space was launched at the start of the 2020–2021 school year, providing students the opportunity to use tools, learn about our food system, and watch plants grow throughout the year. This innovative space was made possible thanks to donations from a group of generous environmentalists.

During the summer and fall, more than 200 individual volunteers of all ages helped set up the garden by moving compost and mulch, installing outdoor classrooms, weeding, planting living clover pathways, and harvesting vegetables and herbs. From broccoli and dinosaur kale to cilantro and the ever-popular stevia, our fall harvest consisted of more than 30 crops. To help us plan our planting season and create the ideal learning environment, St. Patrick’s has partnered with a local gardening organization, Love & Carrots. Our faculty have been hard at work planning ways to embed this garden space into the educational program and ensure that it will be a dynamic addition to our curriculum. Director of Sustainability Sam Mason says, “Lower School science students love using the garden to understand where our food comes from and how our food grows!”

St. Patrick’s has made a commitment to reduce our food waste and help the surrounding community through sustainable practices and donations. The average lifespan in the District can vary up to 17 years. A major contributor to this reality is insufficient access to food, particularly quality food. The United Nation’s second sustainable development goal is also food-related, as 821 million people worldwide are malnourished.

St. Patrick’s has different programs to help support those individuals in need of food in the District and to limit food waste. The first is the Salvation Army’s Grate Patrol, a longtime partnership that delivers food to those who are hungry and without homes in our city. The second is our food donations program, in which we teamed up with US Food Rescue and Campus Kitchen to take our uneaten food and freeze it. It is then taken to Campus Kitchen, where Chef Anthony helps to distribute it to those in need.

To further our work in environmental justice and food advocacy, the Equity Committee and Environmental Action Team teamed up with D.C. Greens, whose founder and executive director Lauren Schweder Biel spoke with parents about their mission and leadership in food access, policy, and education. The conversation was then moved to our Design Lab as Sarah Holway, the Education Director at D.C. Greens, helped our Grade 5 team plan a potential garden and discuss what it really means to have access to healthy food.

There is a wide net of activity that encompasses environmental sustainability, and we all come to see the importance of it through our different areas of interest and passion. Some people hate the idea of waste, so recycling can ease the burden on our ecosystem. The human toll of climate change can be seen in health concerns, labor issues, food insecurity, and more. The Sustainability and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion programs will continue to collaborate on ways to make for a healthier, more just community.

COVID-19 Response at St. Patrick's and Community Reflections

In response to the emerging coronavirus pandemic, St. Patrick's closed our physical campuses in March of 2020, as we moved through the final academic term of the 2019–2020 school year, and opened up a virtual world of possibilities. While so many people, across the country and around the world, experienced isolation, uncertainty, and anxiety, we responded by reasserting those qualities of community, connection, and belonging that have long characterized St. Patrick's and that we continue to nourish. Having completed the 2019–2020 school year in a remote- or distance-learning format that, as many observed, was neither remote nor distant, we worked tirelessly throughout the summer to refine our health protocols and redesign our campuses in hopes of welcoming our students back to their school-home in the fall.

During the spring of 2020, in the absence of onsite teaching and learning, St. Patrick's remained an anchor for children and families as they participated in remote learning and other community activities. The Day School maintained beloved traditions virtually, including regular Chapels, our spirited Hoops for Haiti event in support of our partner church and school in St. Etienne, and a luminous Grade 8 Performing & Studio Arts Night. And we honored our graduating students by highlighting them, advisory by advisory, in concluding publications, then a blocks-long caravan of festively decorated faculty and staff vehicles driven past their homes across two days, and finally a socially-distanced but nonetheless intimate Commencement in the Nave. The hallmarks of a St. Patrick's experience—face-to-face and shoulder-to-shoulder teaching and learning, thoughtful and engaging community experiences, and social-emotional support for students and families—remained strong in a virtual world.

The 2020–2021 school year has brought many changes. St. Patrick's reopened on September 8 with our Nursery School and Kindergarten classes on campus and Grades 1 to 8 engaged in virtual learning. Students in Grades 1 and 2 returned to campus later in September, followed by students in Grade 8 and then, during the week of October 19, students in Grades 3 to 7. During the fall, about 85 percent of our students engaged in on-campus learning, while about 15 percent continue to learn from home through *St. Patrick's Anywhere, Our Remote-Learning Program*. As you might expect, these young people light up their classrooms here on campus, silent for so long last spring, as well as the various Zoom rooms that remain an important setting for teaching and learning during a global pandemic. Given the fluid nature of the pandemic, we have taken nothing for granted with respect to on-campus learning, especially as we moved into the winter months. We have continued to refine our protocols and remain attentive to the evolving public-health conditions in the Washington, D.C. area, with the ongoing support of the Board of Trustees Pandemic-Response and School-Reopening Task Force.



For more information, please visit our COVID-19 Response Hub at www.stpatsdc.org/covid-19-response-hub, which includes the protocols with which the Day School has operated during the fall and winter and sets forth our ongoing response to this dynamic situation. At the center of all of our efforts is our determination to keep our students, faculty and staff, and broader community healthy and safe during this uncertain period.

In the midst of the many challenges presented by the global pandemic, the St. Patrick's community remains strong and overwhelmingly supportive. We are reminded each and every

day of the importance of our work by the animating presence of our students as they head enthusiastically to their classrooms to be with their friends and teachers.

What follows below are reflections from members of our community—two faculty members, two Grade 8 students, and current parents—offering an inside look at the transition to all-virtual learning last spring. We are grateful for the St. Patrick's community and the opportunity to now be able to share these spaces with our students, as they remain their ever-curious selves and strive to make sense of a world that has only become more challenging—and perhaps even more confusing.



Faculty and Staff Reflections

APRIL FLORY, NURSERY SCHOOL TEACHER

Initially, when we learned we were transitioning from on-campus learning to remote learning, I was concerned. It was nothing I had ever done before, and I wasn't sure how our engaging and very hands-on, play-based program would translate to remote learning. But, as they always do, the children surprised me with their continued excitement for learning and their willingness to engage with me and their classmates, even through a screen.

That very first day of "Zoom Class," I was nervous and sensed the children's uneasiness as everyone logged on for that first class together. We started our Morning Meeting with our "Good Morning" song, just as we did every day when we were in-person. As soon as we started to sing, I saw their eyes light up and little smiles sweep across their faces with the recognition of a routine that was so familiar to them. Not only did that put me at ease, but it reminded me that the work we had done in the classroom could continue to guide us and push us forward in our remote-learning program. We were not starting from scratch, rather building on everything we had accomplished thus far in the school year, and the children were ready for it! They loved continuing their routines via Zoom and sharing



the things they were learning with their teachers and peers. They were adaptive and resilient and capable.

The Nursery School operates in a play-based environment with an emergent curriculum. With the switch to remote learning, this play-based environment became the home. As teachers, we provided daily asynchronous activities to support their play at home and build on their natural curiosity about the world around them. We wanted them exploring the outdoors, playing games, using their imaginations, strengthening their fine- and gross-motor skills, building their literacy and cognitive skills, and enjoying as many books as possible. The environment changed, but

the commitment to the development of each child in all of the critical early childhood developmental domains did not. We also had synchronous Zoom classes to focus on developmental skills, but more importantly to connect and strengthen the wonderful relationships between the children and their teachers and each other.

I found St. Patrick's and the Nursery School team to be incredibly supportive and encouraging during this time. Head of Nursery School Paul Giguere reminded us on multiple occasions to be patient with ourselves, that this was something we had never done before and, in many ways, it was like being a first-year teacher all over again. He

was then, and continues to be now, a cheerleader, always quick to celebrate our successes and willing to help solve what's not working. It required a bit of trial and error, a lot of patience, and a healthy dose of humor! Forced into isolation overnight left me craving connection, and my teammates (the other teachers of the Nursery School) were there not only to collaborate with and share ideas, but to listen and provide support when the stressors piled up. So many times I'd get a text message from a colleague that motivated me or helped me solve a problem or, best of all, just made me laugh. Having that support from such thoughtful colleagues really helped make the transition easier.

I can't say enough about the support of the St. Patrick's families, as well. This drastic shift put a huge strain on our parents and families—to essentially co-teach with us in their homes—on top of their many other responsibilities. The amount of support they gave was exactly how this remote program was able to be successful. I was touched with the love and kindness from the parents of my students, who graciously sent messages of encouragement and gratitude, and who tirelessly worked with their young children to complete their school activities and made sure they were in

attendance at their Zoom classes. This was not an easy load, for teachers or for families, and yet when I look back on those few months, I feel an immense amount of gratitude and satisfaction at what we were able to accomplish together.

ELLEN CREMER, LOWER SCHOOL TEACHER

As a teacher, I believe that creating a classroom community and an environment that can support risk-taking is the foundational piece that all students need in order to grow and truly thrive as learners. Typically at the beginning of the school year, I think a lot about the physical structure of my classroom and about how to engage my students so that they are excited about their learning. My main goal has always been to offer each student the right balance of challenge and support, encouraging each to find one's strengths and continue working on any areas of perceived weakness.

Moving abruptly last spring from my comfort and experience with in-person teaching and learning to a remote environment entirely disrupted my teaching practices and pedagogy. Unaware of what best practices were

in the remote world, I experienced disequilibrium, wondering what great learning looked like in an online space and how I might design the appropriate community, connection, and support for students learning remotely. Furthermore, I had to learn how to use technology to teach my students.

Fortunately, with the support of the St. Patrick's administration and my teaching colleagues, I began the process of building a community and nurturing relationships in Zoom rooms. The first step was replicating the classroom's in-person Morning Meeting, making slight adaptations to the new virtual classroom. I kept the Morning Meeting structure the same—asking students to greet each other, to share a small piece of information each day, to play a brief game, and to read a “morning message” about the day's schedule and learning tasks. The Morning Meeting structure was comforting to my students because they knew what to expect each day. The greeting and sharing were very important in allowing students to express themselves and be heard, ultimately promoting wellness.

The next step was creating a curriculum that was interesting, supported skill development, and provided new content for learning. In keeping student agency at the forefront of our curricular decisions, my teaching team and I found ways of promoting engagement and independence for our learners. Whether teaching and learning in-person or virtually, we realized that students needed a space to ask questions and seek their own answers. Our job was to give them that virtual space.

Curating and navigating the various online tools provided the most significant learning challenge for me. “Wayfinding,” or designing student learning experiences in an online space, has been difficult for me to learn. Like my colleagues, I devoted hours to examining various technology tools and selecting the ones to use with my students in order to promote the most effective learning. I can honestly say that I have expanded my teacher's “tool



chest” to include technology that I never dreamed of using.

As a teacher who still has a strong preference for in-person teaching, I have made an important discovery about teaching remotely: The same things that are important to students in a physical classroom are also important in a virtual space. Students need to be heard, they require engaging and interactive learning activities, and they need their teachers to help them develop skills that facilitate agency and independence with their learning. At St. Patrick’s, I am just one of many teachers who has worked to understand how to best use a remote-learning environment to be a place where we can connect with our students and foster a love of learning.

Student Reflections

LOGAN THOMAS ’21

What was it like transitioning from on-campus learning to remote learning this past spring?

To be honest, I don’t remember much, it all feels like a blur. It doesn’t really feel like it, but it has been around eight months since March and what was probably novel then feels like a mundanity now. I don’t recall being shocked to go remote, as things had been escalating for quite some time, and it was mostly the same as in-person school, at least for me, only I could sleep

in later, or wake up early and be able to watch movies before it was time for school.

How did St. Patrick’s help make the transition smooth for you as a student?

St. Patrick’s helped to make the transition smooth. I felt there was a rest period between the in-person and remote-learning timeline. Again, it was a long time ago, so I’m not entirely sure, but we left just before a break, and had one or two weeks to not do school before online learning started. When the remote learning did come into play, we were all used to being at home, and then we had some lighter days to get acclimated to the new virtual schedule.

What on-campus events did you miss out on?

I missed the Cake Raffle! My dad made up for it by baking us copious amounts of chocolate banana bread and cookies.

What do you like about being on campus with your teachers and friends?

I’ve liked the fresh air surrounding the MacArthur Campus. I’ve liked that I can show my friends cool stuff without taking pictures of it first. I’ve liked that my lunches everyday have been interesting and delicious. I’ve liked that there’s a nice tree I can read under and a comfortable bench to sit on when I want to talk with teachers or friends. Though, mostly, I just like being outside and knowing that I’ve left my neighborhood for the first time in eons.

HENRY COHEN ’21

What was it like transitioning from on-campus learning to remote learning this past spring?

It was weird, but also exciting. I certainly only expected to be doing it for a couple of weeks, not for the whole [rest of the] school year. I think it was easier for me because I had already had some practice learning online because I also do Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth (CTY).

How did St. Patrick’s help make the transition smooth for you as a student?

They did a great job with the transition. It seemed like overnight they came up with a plan to make it all happen. My teachers made sure we knew what we had to do and when we had to do it. If we were confused they would be happy to help us, and they made themselves constantly available for office hours and questions.



What on-campus events did you miss out on?

I mainly missed out on seeing my friends. Interacting with them online just wasn’t the same, but we were all in it together. I felt lucky that I was in Grade 7 and not in Grade 8, where I would have missed my Graduation. I have sympathy for last year’s graduating class, but I still think St. Patrick’s did what they could to make it special for them, and I know they enjoyed it.

What do you like about being on campus with your teachers and friends?

Well, I really like seeing my friends and playing Four Square! The competition is still fierce in our cohort, and we all are just happy to get outside and be present with one another. I also really like having PE in person; staying active is important to me, and I find it more enjoyable with my friends around. The energy is different now that we’re back at St. Patrick’s, I think we are all taking it in and soaking up every minute while we can.



Parent Reflections

HAROLD LESTER AND DONALD MCMINN (ALEXANDER '25 AND LILLIAN '24)

What was it like transitioning from on-campus learning to remote learning this past spring for you as a parent and for Alexander and Lillian?

We cannot imagine that the sudden transition from on-campus learning to “virtual” learning-at-home was something that anyone enjoyed, particularly since that transition was not limited to changes in how or where our children were learning during the day. Along with being at home for virtual school, we, like everyone else, suddenly had to worry about whether a trip to the grocery store to try to find paper towels would result in serious illness. Our trip for spring break was toast, replaced by time spent trying to figure out how to transition all of the work that we normally did at the office or on the road into a work-from-home environment while trying to keep a lid on how much extra time our children spent playing Roblox on iPads. Our daughter’s basketball and soccer teams kept cancelling practices and games a week or two out, but did not want to cancel the whole season under the unrealistic thought that, maybe, within a couple of weeks, everything would work itself out. We knew from the beginning that there would be no quick fix, but we understood the desperation (both from an economic and a mission-based standpoint) that the groups working with our children were feeling, and we slowly but inevitably resigned ourselves to the fact that the worlds in which we were used to living were just going to have to stop and turned to our new focus of figuring out how best to protect ourselves and, most importantly, our children.

Thank goodness for St. Patrick’s. We know that, like us, the school did not anticipate the sudden change in the world that we were all facing. But we were incredibly impressed with the speed with which the school found ways to keep our children engaged with

learning virtually and, just as importantly to us at the time, to provide a structured environment upon which the children could depend for learning each school day. It was often the structure in the day that the school provided that kept us going—and that the school was able to put that structure in place, from scratch, in about a week after we were all ordered by local governments to stay home, is still amazing to us. We know other families in other schools and other localities that never got to that point even by the time that school ended for the summer, making us recognize how lucky we are to be at a school with the type of knowledge, resourcefulness, and initiative that our school’s leaders have shown.

Certainly, there was a learning curve both for the school and for us. The school had to find reliable platforms through which teachers could meet with their students and that would allow them to keep the students engaged, and some worked better than others. But, whenever the school perceived that something wasn’t working as well as it had hoped or that there might be a better way of doing something, it would quickly make adjustments. We always felt as though there was a constant effort to review and assess and reevaluate the ways in which the school was connecting with students. And we had to learn right along with our children about the platforms through which they were meeting with their teachers, accessing school lessons, doing their schoolwork, and submitting their homework for review.

Importantly, the school was always keeping us, as parents, updated about its thought processes and hopes and plans, and we always received swift responses to questions that we raised, which made us feel a respected part of the educational process. It is hard for



us to imagine how difficult a challenge it must have seemed to create a virtual learning environment on the fly, but we have a profound respect for the people at St. Patrick’s who applied everything that they knew about education and who tirelessly researched how to approach the type of situation that the school faced to come up with the best solution possible. Although we devoted more attention to each of our children’s school days in the spring than we could have imagined at the start of the school year, a benefit of that time and attention was that we got to see up close, on a daily basis, how dedicated and talented the faculty and staff at St. Patrick’s are and how our children react to them. In many ways, it was a gift to us to get to spend so much time with our children in the spring and to be able to be there to support them and help them feel that, eventually, everything was going to be okay. And, thanks to the time we spent with online learning platforms, we now have a much better understanding of how the “new math” works, although please don’t let Alexander tell you about the time that one of us helped him work through a math problem using the “old math” and unintentionally got the answer wrong.

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HoundPacks Packed with Love

Innovation is often the result of drawing together successful routines or products and using the essence of their success in a new context to solve a problem. At St. Patrick's, we are committed to growing along with our students and meeting each child where that individual is at that moment in time. This past spring challenged us to ask how we can maintain high engagement in learning and in community when we are not able to be together in person. How can we bring the joy of a St. Patrick's classroom into an asynchronous lesson at the kitchen table? How can we meet students literally where they are? In addition, we faced the real challenge of how to support students' need to learn in the doing, not just the seeing and hearing. To do so, students needed materials—from paint and math manipulatives to rocks and magnifying lenses.

In order to maintain high engagement with school and provide consistent access to learning materials, we looked to another source of joy: Giving and receiving packages! Across the summer and into the beginning of fall, one of the few pieces of planning that was clear was the need to plan for anything to happen. This realization brought about the creation of HoundPacks, a regular delivery of supplies for each student to support learning and maintain joyful engagement with their peers, the faculty and staff, and the school community. HoundPacks allow us to be ready at all times for high-engagement, in-person learning. The branded St. Patrick's Anywhere boxes provide each student with personal materials for hybrid learning, provide a connection between remote students and onsite students, and allow for a fully remote experience—providing all students with the supplies needed from school to home. One MacArthur Campus faculty member reminds us of a source of inspiration: “My favorite part of being a mom in a house that celebrates Christmas is the stockings. I LOVE stuffing a stocking! That’s how I’ve been thinking about HoundPacks. Coming up with fun little ‘kits’ that the kids can engage with their hands brings a sense of play into middle school teaching that I don’t think I’ve ever been able to achieve!”

This fall, faculty and staff worked collaboratively at each grade level to plan the HoundPack experience for students, finding ways to share their joy with students and develop new strategies for maintaining grade level-learning goals. For example, Grade 3 builds marathon readers through community challenges for sustained reading. How can we accomplish that goal asynchronously? We sent home bookmarks with a timer to track student progress! Grade 4 has a plan to send joy in each HoundPack through a new year-long exploration of classic toys—think Yo-Yo, Play Dough, Slinky—asking students to use research to evaluate the toys on their accessibility, timelessness, and creativity in invention. A PK class created a beach theme in their first HoundPack, sending sand, rocks, and even a beach umbrella as they learned about the ocean.

So is it working? The answer is evident on the playground as the next batch of HoundPacks are wheeled across the street from the Gymnasium & Performance Center to the classrooms and you hear the shouts of glee from students: “The new HoundPacks are here!” As one Grade 4 student described opening his HoundPacks, “I am curious about what’s inside and, when I am curious, I get excited.” You can see it’s working when Grade 3 students at home and at school are able to create art from handmade stamps, and Grade 1 students read in October with their thematic witch-finger pointers. Lower School art teacher Stephanie Sack shares how “wonderful it is that all students have access to the same materials,” allowing her to “maintain the programmatic goals of exploration and skill-building around artistic materials.”

Through HoundPacks, we have taken the simple pleasures we know abound in giving and receiving gifts and created a structure to maintain this joy while accomplishing the many real needs to maintain our commitment to providing continuity and depth of learning. As Middle School science teacher Annie Krut '97 reminds us, “Most importantly, the HoundPacks are filled with love.”



Horizons at Home Takes On New Meaning in Summer of 2020

Like many organizations and programs this past year, Horizons at St. Patrick's faced the difficult decision of how to continue to provide enrichment and support to our students and families while keeping everyone safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. A national nonprofit organization, Horizons aims to support students from under-resourced communities by instilling in them the joy of learning, the skills for success, and the inspiration to realize their dreams. Anyone who has walked through the doors of Horizons at St. Patrick's can immediately feel the warmth, energy, and love that comes from students and faculty and staff. When the pandemic hit early last spring, the challenge we faced was figuring out how to recreate these feelings in a virtual world. The answer, we quickly learned, was simple: Work together and support one another.

Horizons at St. Patrick's is a part of Horizons Greater Washington, organized around a central leadership office that oversees Horizons sites at three independent schools: St. Patrick's, Maret, and Norwood. This summer, through our Horizons at Home virtual program, all three sites worked together to ensure the program ran as smoothly as possible in providing its normal services for the Horizons community. We shared ideas, resources, teacher expertise, and a great deal of time in order to provide our students with an enriching virtual experience.

In late March, under the supervision of Executive Director Mike DiMarco and Program Director Lauren Simmons, leadership teams from all three sites began meeting on a weekly basis in order to begin planning for the summer. Weeknights turned into weekend phone calls, weekly "Horizons Hangouts" with students, and a half-day teacher orientation in early May. From there, teachers across all three sites began collaborating, sharing ideas, resources, technology expertise, and so much more in order to curate summer themes, write lessons, and choose resources that would be sent home to students.

By mid-June, dozens of volunteers, along with Horizons Greater Washington staff, delivered Horizons at Home Kits to each student. These kits were filled with school supplies, books, art supplies, and STEAM projects. With these supplies, students were able to engage in daily synchronous and asynchronous activities with their classmates and teachers.

Finally, the program was set to begin. Every day, for six weeks, from late June through early August, students, teachers, and assistant teachers signed into Zoom to engage with one another from home.

Middle School Electives served as a highlight. Students from all three Horizons Greater Washington sites met once a week in small groups of their choosing to learn a new skill

from Horizons Assistant Teachers (HATs). During this time, students wrote poetry and learned basic knitting, engaged with digital photography projects, practiced yoga and strength-training skills, completed art projects with found objects from around their home, wrote adventure stories, or even played virtual Pokemon. Combining the elements of choice, broadening the community, and relying on assistant teachers to bring personal expertise into the classroom proved to be a perfect model for engagement with our oldest students.

Horizons at Home also provided a unique opportunity for Horizons students to connect with guest speakers from all across the country.

Among them was Katie Ledecy, U.S Olympic swimmer and five-time Gold Medalist, who led a Zoom session with the entire Horizons Greater Washington community. Students prepared questions for her and engaged in a conversation about goal-setting and the cancelled Summer Olympics in Japan. Middle school students met Rex Ogle, comic-book writer and author of the memoir *Free Lunch*, a title many of them read. Mr. Ogle led a discussion on the power of grit and sharing personal stories. In response, a group of Grade 6 students wrote a collective memoir about their experience during COVID-19. Students were also able to connect with two NASA scientists. In those sessions, students learned about astrophysics, rovers, and the required skills and qualifications to work at NASA. These opportunities were highlights for our students, teachers, and speakers alike.

Two St. Patrick's parents, Elaine del Cerro (Mateo '25) and Roxana Hakimi (Pasha '19), worked tirelessly to provide groceries to 20 Horizons families who were hit hardest by the pandemic. With the support of volunteers and St. Patrick's

alumna Helen Prince (ex. '19), Elaine and Roxana continue to provide this support as we move into the winter months.

Weekly newsletters went out to families and weekly parent sessions were held via Zoom with site leadership and program directors. Families and faculty and staff were connecting in ways no one thought possible and, by the end of the summer, we started to ask our community: "What aspects of Horizons at Home should we keep when our program returns to in-person learning and engagement?" The answers were fascinating.

Teachers and site directors believe that the collaboration

across sites was instrumental to the success of the program and would love to see cross-site planning meetings continue in future summers. Families were encouraged by the weekly open sessions and newsletters, which helped them "stay connected to the classroom." Students were thrilled by the books, art supplies, and STEAM kits that brought Horizons into their homes.

All in all, 261 students enrolled in the six-week program across all three sites, the average daily attendance was 79%, 301 Horizons at Home kits were delivered to students, each student submitted an average of 3.86 assignments online per week, and more than 100

grocery deliveries were made to families throughout the area.

While nothing matches the feeling of warmth one gets from spending a day at Horizons at St. Patrick's, Horizons at Home provided a new way of thinking about our program and our greater community. As we have moved into an unprecedented school year and started thinking about next summer, our hope is that we can slowly return to a "new normal": one in which we continue to find ways to make our community stronger through flexibility, communication, and shared time.



U.S. Olympic gold medalist Katie Ledecy (above) and award winning author Rex Ogle (right) were two of Horizons 2020 guest speakers.





Lights, Camera, Auction! Was Movie Magic!

The St. Patrick's community rolled out the red carpet to celebrate the Auction to Benefit the Financial Aid Program on Saturday, March 7, 2020. The theme—Lights, Camera, Auction!—brought the magic of cinema to the Day School campus and the Gymnasium & Performance Center. Our community, both near and far, were the real stars of the show as they helped raise critical funds for the Financial Aid Program.

The evening was made possible by our talented and dynamic parent volunteers and directed by our devoted Auction Co-Chairs: Claire Farver (Holt '23, Frances Gray '27), Johanna Howe (Barclay '26, Birdie '29), Michelle Maddux (Victor ex. '21, Hedges ex. '22, Scarlett '25), and Denise Prince (Helen ex. '19, Peter ex. '21, Sally ex. '24, Michael '29). The Nave, Great Hall, and Gymnasium & Performance Center were transformed with movie props, projections, and concessions to help set the scene. Guests walked the red carpet dressed as their favorite movie characters.



The Auction raised more than \$460,000 to support the education of St. Patrick's students, making it possible for the Day School to fulfill its commitment to socioeconomic diversity. Out of this total, more than \$290,000 was raised directly through Fund-A-Scholar, with 212 donors taking part in raising their paddles or making online donations. About a quarter of our St. Patrick's students receive financial aid, but every student receives the benefits. The Auction itself raises 18% of the financial aid budget and helps to open the door to even more families whose children will thrive here and endlessly enrich the St. Patrick's community.



Top row: Mia Bass, Lindsay, and Katharine Reishman get into the spirit of the evening. LaMeka and Dorjan Short got into character from *Coming to America*. **Middle row:** Decorations co-chairs Elaine del Cerro and Liz Levin in costume; The spotlight was on the 2019-2020 co-chairs Johanna Howe, Michelle Maddux, Denise Prince, and Claire Farver with Head of School Peter A. Barrett. **Bottom row:** Liz and Paul Bonner browsing Silent Auction Items; Diana Allen, Megan Parker, and Lucia Cassidy joined in on the theme with a fun group costume.

WOLFHOUND WATCH





BELOW ARE RESULTS from the 2019–2020 winter basketball season. St. Patrick's competes in the Capital Athletic Conference (CAC), a group of like-configured independent schools in the metropolitan area.

BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL

Coach
Gheo Smith

Record
12–4

CAC Tournament
First Place

Season Highlight
Defeating Sheridan for the third time in the season, 49–38, in the CAC semifinal game.

CAC All-Stars
Jack Sabel, Avery McHenry, Malachi Phillips, and Burton White

BOYS JV BASKETBALL

Coach
Sam Mason

Record
12–6

CAC Tournament
Third Place

Season Highlight
Winning the consolation game of the CAC Tournament.

GIRLS VARSITY BASKETBALL

Coach
Clifton Cottom

Record
3–12

CAC Tournament
Fourth Place

Season Highlight
28–14 victory over Green Acres to end the regular season.

CAC All-Stars
Heaven Samuel, Katie Pinto, and Riley Knakmuhs

GIRLS JV BASKETBALL

Coach
Shyrone Palms

Record
13–3

CAC Tournament
Second Place

Season Highlight
Competing in the CAC championship game.



Board Welcomes New Trustees and Honors Those Departing

The Day School's governing board, the Board of Trustees, provides the strategic vision and fiduciary oversight that strengthen St. Patrick's for current and future students. We are deeply grateful for their volunteer leadership and dedication to our school community.

We extended our appreciation to Suzanne Clark-Lebedev, Tiane Doman, and Mae Grennan, as they concluded their Board service. Departing Trustees were honored at their final meeting in May. Newly elected Trustees, whose terms were to begin July 1, were also in attendance as non-voting observers at the May meeting.

SHAYNA HAMMOND P '23, '25 is a leadership and life coach who has coached and developed thousands of school and senior leaders within the education and nonprofit sectors for nearly 20 years. She serves as a faculty member of Goleman EI's Emotional Intelligence Coaching Certification Program and is the Founder and CEO of Teach To Lead, a school leadership development organization dedicated to supporting school leaders in leading through the lens of racial equity. Shayna recently founded Shayna Renee, a coaching and consulting practice dedicated to creating spaces, methods, and conditions for Black women in leadership to thrive. In this capacity, Shayna coaches individuals and groups of Black women leaders from around the globe in a research-based and experiential-supported coaching methodology. Prior to founding Teach To Lead and Shayna Renee, Shayna led the national development of teacher-leaders at KIPP Foundation, supported principals within the Baltimore City School System, led the highest-performing middle school in Baltimore, and was an award-winning teacher. Shayna earned a bachelor's degree in kinesiology with minors in business and English from James Madison University, a master of arts in teaching from Johns Hopkins University, and a masters of education focusing on administration and supervision from National Louis University. She completed the Certificate in Leadership Coaching Program at Georgetown University and is also a part-time faculty member at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School

COVID-19 RESPONSE, PARENT REFLECTIONS, continued from page 10

How did St. Patrick's help to make the transition smooth, as we moved to remote teaching and learning this past spring?

One of the most important things that the administrators at St. Patrick's did, we think, was to communicate often and honestly with parents and students. Having to go from in-person instruction to remote learning was both unexpected and scary, especially given the reasons that required online learning. Although the educators at St. Patrick's were definitely in charge of figuring out how to make remote learning work, we never felt like we were being left out of the loop. Especially since parental support was essential in that transition, communication was extremely important, and we never felt

like we should not ask questions or that people were too busy to give us some of their time. To the contrary, the school encouraged parents to ask questions and make suggestions, all so that the learning process could be improved.

The other thing that helped the transition was the teachers' continuing efforts to connect with the students. Our children very much appreciated knowing that their teachers were listening and responding—and holding them to account for school work. With remote learning, our children are realizing that they are responsible for being their own learning advocates. They do not always follow through, but they are realizing that much of their learning is on them.

Were you able to feel the St. Patrick's community spirit, even when the campuses were closed?

We very much missed seeing people in person, especially given that one of our children was new to St. Patrick's last year and we'd not yet met many families in that grade. That said, there was a considerable sense of gallows humor among parents last spring as we all shared our experiences.

One that proved unexpectedly helpful was our children's internet support network. As the lockdown first came on, our daughter and her friends had a group text chain. It helped connect them, and they all saw each other staying close to home.

**SHAYNA HAMMOND P '23, '25**

of Education's PENN Literacy Network. When Shayna isn't coaching, facilitating, or leading, she's enjoying quality time with her two children, Judah '23 and Joelle '25, learning new sports, showing up for her Tribe, or exploring a new venue for spiritual growth and renewal.

KATHERINE LUCAS P '20, '29 and her husband Brian are both native Washingtonians. Katherine graduated from the University of Virginia and then earned a law degree from Georgetown University Law Center, where her studies focused on literacy and the law. After law school, Katherine worked in private practice in telecommunications regulation and continued her volunteer work with GULC's Street Law program. Katherine is currently the director of a private foundation with a primary focus on enhancing access to education from preschool through the university level. Her foundation work involves reviewing grant proposals, helping to determine grant size, and working with nonprofits in achieving their mission. Katherine serves on the Advisory Committee of Building Bridges Across the River and works regularly with this nonprofit in its fundraising efforts. Her family spends time in the summer on Kiawah Island, South Carolina, where they love to bike, swim, and do anything outdoors. Katherine has been actively engaged as a volunteer in the St. Patrick's community since her son, Evan '20, started in Kindergarten. She concluded her two-year term as Parents Association President in June, also having served as a member of the Parents Association Executive Committee from 2013 to 2017. Along with volunteering at events such as Family Fun Day and Book Fair and as a Room Parent, Katherine was a MacArthur

**KATHERINE LUCAS P '20, '29****DAVID SIEGEL P '25, '28**

Campus Co-Chair for the Campaign for St. Patrick's at Sixty and Co-Chair of the Publishing Center and has participated each year on the committee for the Auction to Benefit the Financial Aid Program. The role of Parents Association President has offered Katherine an amazing opportunity to work with so many dedicated parents. Katherine looks forward to continuing her involvement in the St. Patrick's community with her twins, Emma '29 and Mason '29.

DAVID SIEGEL P '25, '28 is a native of Philadelphia who attended the Episcopal Academy, a school he describes as very similar to St. Patrick's in its Episcopal affiliation and sense of community. He earned his undergraduate degree from Georgetown University and an MBA from The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. He credits his parents with instilling the value of prioritizing education. David appreciates the chance to serve on the Board of Trustees because he believes in the opportunities a tremendous education can provide. David is currently a managing director in sales at LLR Partners, a Philadelphia-based private equity firm that invests in growth technology companies. In that role, he connects with CEOs, investors, and influencers in many of the leading technology businesses, especially in the Washington metropolitan area. His son, Benjamin '28, and daughter, Ryan '25, have been part of the St. Patrick's community for the past five years. He is an active participant in school life serving as a Room Parent for two years and is a fan of the Auction to Benefit Financial Aid. David looks forward to more opportunities to be involved and make a difference.



We Welcome Faculty & Staff Class of 2020

Sydney Britton	Nursery School Assistant Teacher
Crystal Buffington	Grade 3
Anna Cadwell '10	Grade 6 (Long-Term Substitute), Middle School Associate
Jack Cantlay	Associate Director of Enrollment Management
Victoria Carson	Kindergarten
Alana Cato	Grade 3 Learning Specialist
Sonya Derman	Lower School Art
Imani Edwards	Librarian (Long-Term Substitute)
Elizabeth Gambal '06	Nursery School Assistant Teacher
Christopher Gregory	Systems Administrator
Annie Krut '97	Grades 5 + 8 Science
Shannon Miller	Information Technology Specialist
Patrick Neilan	Grade 7 Humanities
Darya Osokina	Grade 2 (Long-Term Substitute)
Dana Saab	Director of Annual Fund
Vaughn Samuel	Grades 7 + 8 Math
Elise Sjogren	Grade 2
Ed Thornley	Chaplain, Grades 7 + 8 Religion
Anna Young	Grade 2 Learning Specialist
Jena Young	Nursery School Assistant Teacher



SYDNEY BRITTON returns to St. Patrick's as a Nursery School assistant teacher. She is a Washington-area native who also attended St. Patrick's in Nursery School and Kindergarten. Sydney recently completed her bachelor's degree in sociology at the University of Maryland. Although a new teacher in the Nursery School, Sydney is not new to such a role at St. Patrick's. She has spent the past four years as an Extended Day instructor, as well as a Girls on the Run coach. She has also had the opportunity to work with Horizons at St. Patrick's the past three summers. Her time spent at St. Patrick's solidified her desire to teach and sparked her affinity for working with preschool-aged children. When not at St. Patrick's, she enjoys crocheting and playing with her dog, Paisley. She is looking forward to growing her connection with the Wolfhound community in her new role.



CRYSTAL BUFFINGTON has joined the Grade 3 team from the Washington School for Girls, where she was a Grade 4 teacher and the social studies and English lead. Crystal, who has her bachelor's degree in communication from North Park University and is currently enrolled in a master's degree in divinity program at Wesley

Theological, has extensive experience across the early childhood, primary, and elementary-school grades, including Grade 2 at Meridian Public Charter School.



ANNA CADWELL '10 has joined the MacArthur Campus as a Grade 6 long-term substitute and Middle School associate. She is a Washington native and a St. Patrick's lifer. She earned her bachelor's degree in anthropology from Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Her academic studies were largely

focused on the Himalayan region. Prior to returning to St. Patrick's, Anna spent a year teaching English at a government school in rural Nepal on a Fulbright Scholarship. During her time in Nepal, she grew a strong affinity for teaching and is looking forward to the year ahead at St. Patrick's.



JACK CANTLAY has joined the Day School as the Associate Director of Enrollment Management after four years of working at a boarding school in Connecticut, the Frederick Gunn School (formerly "The Gunnery"). There, he served as the Associate Director of Admissions, Head Dorm Parent for junior boys,

student advisor, and coach of several sports including football, basketball, and baseball. Before that, he worked in sales for three years in D.C. Originally from Lawrenceville, NJ, Jack graduated from the Lawrenceville School and matriculated to Hampden-Sydney College, where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in history and rhetoric. He spent 11 summers as a camper and counselor at Camp Kieve for Boys and is thrilled to be at a school with a similar, amazing energy!



VICTORIA CARSON, who joined the Kindergarten team this year, brings more than 25 years of experience in education, most of which was spent at the same elementary school in Wheaton, Illinois, where she taught the primary grades. Victoria has experience in curriculum design and instruction and has helped

facilitate professional development in all subject areas in the primary grades. Victoria is a native New Yorker and a graduate of the Ethel Walker School. She has a bachelor's degree from Wheelock College and earned a master's degree in reading education at Concordia College. She is thrilled to make the move to Maryland and to St. Patrick's in particular. Victoria now lives in Bethesda with her husband Andrew and is the proud grandparent of her daughter's children Mac and Vivian, as well as the newest Carsons—identical twins Emma and Charlotte, just born to her son and his wife.



ALANA CATO has joined the Day School as a Grade 3 learning specialist, bringing more than six years of experience teaching students with diverse backgrounds. Alana received her bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Florida and her master's degree in special education, concentrating in

behavior disorders, from the University of South Florida. Alana began her teaching career as an autism spectrum disorders educator for students in Grades 1 to 5 in Tampa, Florida. She moved to the D.C. area, where she continued her work as a middle school learning specialist and special education coordinator at BASIS public charter school. Alana enjoys creating innovative and engaging materials for students to use in the classroom environment. In her spare time, Alana enjoys hiking, crafting, and finding new coffee shops in the area.



SONYA DERMAN moved to Washington, D.C. from Brooklyn to join the St. Patrick's community as a Lower School art teacher. She received a bachelor's degree in studio art from Carleton College, a master's degree in communication art and design from the Royal College of Art in London, and a New York State K-12 art teaching

certification from Brooklyn College. Sonya has worked as a teaching artist with adults and children in New York, San Francisco, and London; led professional development on contemporary art and artistic development for teachers; and worked as an art teacher within schools. Outside of teaching, Sonya maintains her own multidisciplinary art practice.



IMANI EDWARDS is already a familiar face at St. Patrick's. In addition to previous long-term substitute tenures, she is parent to Shaun '27 and Danielle '29 and serves on the Parents Association Executive Committee. While joining the Day School as a long-term substitute in the library, Imani is also a cohort leader. A

native Washingtonian, Imani studied at Howard University, receiving her bachelor's degree in human development, and later continued with graduate studies in secondary math education. Before coming to St. Patrick's, Imani spent almost a decade and a half teaching middle school and high school math and developing math curriculum and professional development for the D.C. Public Schools. In her spare time, she enjoys Scrabble, gardening, and baking. She looks forward to continuing to be an active member of the St. Patrick's community.

Faculty Spotlight



ELIZABETH GAMBAL '06

has returned to St. Patrick's as the PK2 assistant teacher. Born and raised in the District, she recently came back to the area after six years in New York City. While always loving working with children as a camp counselor, babysitter, and classroom aide, Elizabeth did not initially pursue

teaching. She moved to New York to act after graduating from Kenyon College with a degree in drama. Having found minor but meaningful success in the industry, she decided to move into behind-the-scenes work as a stage manager and documentary television producer. Those skills led her into casting for television and ultimately admissions at a Manhattan private school, where she concluded she would rather be in the classroom. Elizabeth couldn't be happier to begin her teaching career at St. Patrick's.



CHRISTOPHER GREGORY

has been a regular around the St. Patrick's community for quite some time, originally doing contract information technology work at St. Patrick's when he first moved to D.C. with his wife. This year, we welcomed him as the systems administrator. Christopher grew up in Fairbanks, Alaska,

hiking, biking, and fishing and started his career as a chef in college. He went to culinary school in Fairbanks and cooked in restaurants from Fairbanks to Boston to San Francisco. In the late 90s, while cheffing in San Francisco, he began his career in information technology, worked for an online cosmetics company at the beginning of the dotcom bubble, then transitioned to the Pacific Stock Exchange and then merchant banks when the bubble burst.



ANNIE KRUT '97 is delighted to be returning to St. Patrick's. She previously worked as a Grade 7 learning specialist on the former MacArthur Campus. This year, Annie joins us to teach Grades 5 and 8 science. Before receiving her master's degree in secondary science education, Annie worked as a published research

scientist with the Center for Genetic Medicine Research at Children's National Medical Center. Since transitioning to the classroom, her teaching career has spanned public, charter, and independent schools, leading to licenses in Spanish, biology,

special education, and English across three different states. Annie holds degrees from George Washington University's School of Education and Human Development, the University of Virginia, National Cathedral School and, most importantly, St. Patrick's. Go, Wolfhounds!



SHANNON MILLER

has joined the Information Technology Department as the new IT specialist. Shannon has a range of experience in the field of technology, including as a help desk technician and a consultation agent and repair agent. That background involved technical support, both remote

and face-to-face, trouble-shooting and diagnostic work, and systems administration and support work. Shannon earned her bachelor's degree in cybersecurity and information technology at Marymount University.



PATRICK NEILAN

has become the Grade 7 humanities teacher. Prior to joining the Middle School faculty, Patrick taught Grades 7 and 8 social studies at a Connecticut public school and has also taught English as a second language to students diverse in age, culture, and language backgrounds

in Connecticut and Kazakhstan. He received a bachelor's degree in history and government from Manhattan College and a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from the University of Connecticut. Originally from New England, Patrick avoids regional rivalries by rooting for the New York Mets! Patrick lives in the District and looks forward to exploring Washington and hiking trails in the region.



DARYA OSOKINA has joined the St. Patrick's community in Grade 2 as a maternity-leave substitute for Victoria Gibson after having taught various grades from pre-Kindergarten to Grade 10, as well as adults in various capacities over the past 10 years. Darya has a master's degree in education from George Mason University. She is

originally from Russia and has lived in the United States for more than half of her life, mostly in Virginia. She comes from a small family of teachers and musicians and enjoys learning about different cultures and languages.



DANA SAAB has joined the Development Office as the new Director of the Annual Fund. Prior to joining St. Patrick's, Dana was the Director of Advancement at the American International School in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where she led the school's fundraising and marketing efforts, and worked in a variety of other roles during

her career, including as a marketing director, an independent marketing consultant, and an account manager for various firms in Beirut, Lebanon, and Jeddah. Dana has a bachelor's degree in psychology from the American University of Beirut and a master's degree in international marketing management from Boston University. Ancestrally Lebanese, Dana was born in California and raised in Greece and lived in several countries before settling here with her two daughters in Arlington, Virginia.



VAUGHN SAMUEL has joined St. Patrick's as the Grades 7 and 8 math teacher. Prior to working at St. Patrick's, he served in a variety of roles at Lowell School before he found his calling as a middle school math teacher. Originally from Tallahassee, Florida, Vaughn has been in the D.C. area for about seven years

now. His son Luke preceded Vaughn at St. Patrick's, where Luke is in our Infant-Toddler Center. Vaughn has grown to love the Nationals and is a huge baseball fan in general, having coached at Lowell. Other passions include going to the movies, riding his bike through Rock Creek Park, and enjoying the company of his wife Elizabeth and son. He is excited to join Luke as a member of the St. Patrick's community.



ELISE SJOGREN, a native of Richmond, Virginia, has become a Grade 2 homeroom teacher. Elise spent the last eight years in the Middle East, first teaching Palestinian Grade 3 students in Jerusalem and then working with young Syrian refugee students in Lebanon, where she also ran the teacher development program for

their Syrian staff. She has a bachelor's degree in English from Christopher Newport University and is completing her master's degree in education from Johns Hopkins University. Elise recently moved to the Washington area in order to marry her husband Chris Lee. She is excited for this new adventure and has already been deeply impressed with St. Patrick's.



THE REV. EDWARD THORNLEY has joined St. Patrick's as the new Day School Chaplain and Associate Rector. Originally from the United Kingdom, Fr. Ed earned his BA (Hons) in theological studies from the University of Exeter, and his MA in pastoral theology from the Cambridge Theological Federation

(Anglia Ruskin University), while training for ordination at Westcott House, Cambridge, and Yale Divinity School. Ordained in the Church of England, he served parishes, schools, universities, and hospital chaplaincies in Cambridge, Norwich, and Central London before moving to the United States. He then served as Middle School and Upper School Chaplain at All Saints Episcopal School in Fort Worth, Texas, before coming to St. Patrick's. His wife Devon is an academic theologian at Wesley Theological Seminary. Father Ed is thrilled about sharing in the diverse spiritual life of St. Patrick's and is grateful to be here.



ANNA YOUNG has joined the Day School as a Grade 2 learning specialist. She has a master of arts in teaching from American University and a masters in curriculum and instruction, focused on reading, from Trinity University. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia with a

major in art history. She has been a classroom teacher in D.C. Public Schools as well as several local independent schools. She most recently served as a reading specialist at Grace Episcopal in Kensington and as a learning specialist at St. Ambrose Catholic School in Cheverly. Born in North Carolina, she considers Richmond, Virginia to be home. She moved to D.C. after college and has been a long-term resident, sharing her life with her husband, Frank, and her two adorable Westies.



JENA YOUNG has become a Nursery School assistant teacher. She moved to the Washington area two years ago from Michigan, where she also taught preschool. Jena has a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in sociology and statistics from Eastern Michigan University.

Her original plan did not involve teaching or working with children, but she worked as a graduate assistant at the university's daycare for two years, fell in love with that work, and has been teaching in a school setting ever since.



REMEMBERING PAM JONES AND CHERYL GEIGER

The year of 2020 will long be remembered as one of loss, with hundreds of thousands of lives lost as a result of the coronavirus, as well as those who left us due to other causes. Here, we want to celebrate the lives of two particular individuals who fundamentally shaped and deeply enriched St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School during decades of teaching—individuals who died about three months apart in 2020 following strokes.

One of those remarkable individuals, Pam Jones, taught art at St. Patrick's from 1969 to 2004, an astonishing 35 years of service to an institution and to a discipline that she loved. Pam died on February 24 in Pennsylvania, where she lived on her farm in New Paris. Three months later, consummate Nursery School teacher Cheryl Geiger, who lived in Kensington, died on May 15. Cheryl taught at St. Patrick's from 1985 to 2007, close to a quarter century, leaving a similarly lasting impression on the Day School and those who taught and learned here.

Perhaps curiously, yet certainly appropriately, St. Patrick's honored Cheryl and Pam at consecutive Parent Reunion Luncheons in 2008 and 2009. We recognized them then as towering figures in the history of the Day School, gifted artisans-professionals in their chosen fields, and distinct personalities in the vibrant life of this place. The remarks below are excerpted from those offered at the luncheons by Head of School Peter A. Barrett.

REMARKS IN HONOR OF ART TEACHER PAM JONES, OCTOBER 2009

By the time I joined St. Patrick's in 1994, Pam had already been teaching here for a quarter of a century. She knew a St. Patrick's that I had never known, a St. Patrick's that had not yet come to rest—although I have rarely ever seen this place at rest—along Whitehaven Parkway. It would be another eight years after Pam's arrival in 1969 until the main Elementary School was

built, uniting all of the Day School save for the Nursery School, and then again eight more years before the Nursery School and Church, the section in which we gather now, were completed. By the time Pam left St. Patrick's in 2004, we had renovated and expanded the Elementary School building, creating the Upper School Art Studio as upstairs neighbor to what then became the Lower School Art Studio, and graduated our first two Grade 8 classes from the MacArthur Campus. I find it difficult to imagine all of the changes that Pam experienced, during her 35 years at St. Patrick's, some of them—most of them, I hope—good, but not all of them, we know. But all along the way, she provided a powerful thread, a powerful connection, a commitment to encouraging and enabling children to see that has come to pervade our entire curriculum.

I suppose what I have claimed for Pam Jones is that she created what I'm tempted to call an ethic of seeing—characterized by a close watchfulness, an attentiveness to detail without ever losing sight of the whole, the entirety that those details comprise. Given that Pam is an art teacher, she wanted her students not simply to be watchful and attentive, but to be able to capture what is they saw—not what the mind has already pictured, but what they truly saw—so, looking, watching, seeing, and then capturing, embodying, sharing what you really saw.

The creation, the cultivation of that ethic of seeing, of watchfulness, of attentiveness, then, is one of Pam's enduring legacies here, but it reminds me of one other fact about Pam Jones—one that I'll kind of back into by noting that I have always been a little intimidated by Pam. Anyone who walks through St. Patrick's—way back when, and certainly now—ends up commenting on the remarkable student art displayed on the walls throughout the school. I had a visiting author/illustrator marvel at the work, even as she observed that she could tell exactly what concept or technique or material the art teacher was getting at in the lesson that produced the work. Sooner or later, most students at St. Patrick's discover that their Head

of School is color-blind. Fortunately that recognition has yet to happen because of what I'm wearing on any particular day, as my wife has for three and a half decades dressed me each morning. But it might come up during a classroom visit when I ask a student what the color is that she is adding to a painting, or somehow matter-of-factly observe that I don't know whether two particular colors go together. They are alternately amused, amazed, sometimes confused, and universally sympathetic. Few of them can imagine what life with my rather disabled, or non-existent, sense of color might be like—but all of them know it can't be good.

So for me, the art work that our students create with the instruction of individuals like Pam and her colleagues and successors in our Art Department has represented a challenge for me, even a rebuke. Our *Curriculum Guide*, in language that has been around since Pam's days, states, "Creative expression is treated as learnable and attainable. Art classes allow students with diverse learning styles and a wide range of abilities to recognize and celebrate their unique strengths and creativity." Hear that: "Creative expression is treated as learnable and

attainable." I have always figured that I was living proof of the folly of that claim.

But that is the second quality that has fascinated me—and vaguely intimidated me about Pam: The utter seriousness with which she went about her craft here at St. Patrick's, instructing and encouraging and enabling children to make art, to believe in themselves long enough to get started, and then to carry their work through to completion, and to delay satisfaction with their efforts until they had done all that they could to capture what they saw, to capture whatever part of the world around them, or the world inside them, they were trying to capture. Too often in our schools, the arts have been the first to go on the chopping block. But Pam and her colleagues were utterly serious about their work, a seriousness of purpose that has enabled the creative arts to stand side-by-side with the core academic program here at St. Patrick's and, in turn, to enrich the lives of the children whom they taught. The role of the creative arts at St. Patrick's may at some point in our history have been contested ground. It was Pam Jones and others like her who enabled the arts to become central to our program and to the lives of our children.



REMARKS IN HONOR OF NURSERY SCHOOL TEACHER CHERYL GEIGER, OCTOBER 2008

What else do those sample [Parent-Teacher Conference] notes tell us about Cheryl? Well, they are filled with worms and flowers and magnets and sinking and floating and ideas and excitement. Of course, you might say, there are seeds and worms and magnets—they are Nursery School science comments. But so many of you here today had children in Cheryl's PK homeroom class, not in her science class, and you know that what was true in her science classes was also true in everything that she did, every lesson that she taught, and every conversation that she had with a child. Cheryl wanted to open up the world to her students—not so that they would see that world as Cheryl saw it (except that I do believe she wanted them to see that world with interest and enthusiasm and joy, just as she did) but more so that that they could come to understand that world in ways that mattered first to them and that would, in turn, matter to the world itself—a bold claim perhaps, but I am confident that Cheryl harbored that hope for the children that she taught. *Because of you I like bugs*, wrote one child in the memory book we prepared at the time of Cheryl's retirement. *Thank you for teaching me about science and nature and not to be afraid of snakes*, wrote another.

Cheryl was passionate about the children she taught, but she was also passionate about the topics she brought to children—bugs, rocks, flowers, snakes, the human body—and language and number and all of those elemental things that form the cognitive, social-emotional, and moral infrastructure around which children craft their world and themselves from that point forward. How fortunate those children were to have Cheryl lead them out into that wider world, one that can sometimes be confusing and even threatening but that Cheryl worked so hard to have them learn more about in a context of safety and love and hope and deep and abiding respect.

Those sample notes also reveal, or at least begin to suggest, so many other things that are so special about Cheryl. She had an unfailing belief in each child, in the goodness of that child, in the individuality of that child, and in the promise of that child, and she established a deep and affectionate connection with each child. On my sabbatical a few years ago, I visited a high school in Indianapolis, where two former St. Patrick's students, twins actually, were thrilled to connect with a visitor from St.

Patrick's, but what they really wanted to know was how Mrs. Geiger was doing. Across time and space, young people—and I would guess, looking around this room, their parents—carry Cheryl Geiger with them. What an amazing gift!

Of course, that reminds us that Cheryl Geiger was not only a gift to the children of St. Patrick's. She was also a gift to the adults who inhabit this place—to the teachers, the colleagues and friends with whom she shared St. Patrick's—and to the parents who trusted her so deeply.

Cheryl Geiger was the consummate professional, recognizing that her own growth as a teacher was essential if she was going to be able to promote growth in children. There was always something fresh and new in her classroom and her

curriculum. She was always thoroughly prepared—I saw her here at school on far too many weekends—and her classroom was always alive and exciting. Our Nursery School teachers still use many of the ideas that she developed and the materials that she made—math games and dramatic play props. As one former colleague wrote in the memory book, *You have been an inspiration to me—to all of us, Cheryl. We have aspired to your inventive, creative ways of teaching and your unsurpassed devotion to your kids. You have taught us to make the most of what we are given.*

As fortunate as we have been to have Cheryl Geiger among us for more than 20 years—a gifted teacher, a skilled craftsperson, a valued guide for children and their parents, and a trusted colleague—I should mention that

we're fortunate that she's still sitting here right now, listening to these remarks. You see, Cheryl was dubious about this whole venture, agreeing to allow herself to be singled out for special recognition today only under some duress, if we can picture the persistent efforts of her dear friend Pat Spector as representing any form of duress. What persuaded her was the promise that we would link today's recognition of Cheryl to the recognition of, the honoring of, all of our teachers—indeed, of the profession that Cheryl chose to make her own. So let me fulfill that promise in closing:

In celebrating great individual teachers, we must always be aware, and Cheryl would want us to be clear, that we celebrate the craft of teaching and the many exceptional people drawn to it, a disproportionate number of whom, we believe, are here at St. Patrick's.





GRADUATION DINNER REMARKS

BY MACARTHUR CAMPUS DIRECTOR/DIRECTOR OF STUDIES ANN ADAMS VIA ZOOM

Welcome, everyone, especially the Class of 2020 and their parents. Welcome to the students who pulled off the first virtual art gallery and musical in St. Patrick's history, and welcome to their mentors who made it happen. Tonight is another night of celebration, another night to hear your inspiring voices. And we need your inspiration. We are one joyous community tonight, but you are graduating in the most tumultuous year in recent history. Our country is fighting two plagues, COVID-19 and racism, the former many thought impossible in modern times and the latter a stain on our country before and at the very moment the words were drafted, all men are created equal, a pairing that allowed a terrible hypocrisy and one full of terror for those enslaved and their descendants. Those words are approaching 250 years old, but the words and the Constitution they built have provided the tools for reform, even as the hypocrisy has corrupted those tools. With all the great Black reformers, I don't like to rely on the most well known, but he did say it best at the age of 26 when he first stepped into the spotlight to lead the Montgomery Bus Boycott to end segregation: "If I am wrong," said the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., "the Constitution of the United States is wrong." So we must uphold that Constitution and the rights it promises even as we, and I am hopeful that we finally will, tear down the hypocrisy, using our protected rights of freedom of speech, right to assemble, and right to petition.

I am proud to be part of an institution that has issued, and pledged to keep, a call to action to address the specifics of racism, as it is up to the adults to eliminate the policies that perpetuate it. And the community has redoubled its efforts to make sure that all its members have the education to create a safe, equitable environment for all and the vision to be part of the necessary change. To end hypocrisy, you need its antidote, integrity. Integrity, being whole, being true to your words through your actions, builds trust, and imagine an America where all its citizens could trust one another. Claude Steele, in his decades studying the pernicious effects of racism in education, has come to a rather simple conclusion: The paramount importance of trusting relationships in furthering both learning and tearing down racism. St. Patrick's has sought to build those trusting relationships. It has stumbled and occasionally dawdled. I know I have stumbled and dawdled. But I look at you, the Class of 2020, and say, you have seen through the hypocrisy, you have learned our history, you know what needs to be changed, and you are going to change it at least in part because of the trusting relationships you have built here.

The focus of our Graduation is our students who are leaving, our graduates, already examples of excellence. You are about to hear from each one, and I'd like to give you a little background.

The guiding question for our students at the MacArthur Campus, inspired by our Mission Statement, is:

How can I make a difference in the world?

And we know that you *will* make a difference when you know what you want to make a difference in. We therefore asked the Grade 8 students to put a small stake in the ground and to commit to a value or values that they believe in. Their pieces tonight are modeled after those from the 1950's radio show, *This I Believe*, which was resurrected in the early 2000's. There are now two book compilations. These are not full-blown personal credos but rather one facet of a belief. One of my favorites is one titled "Always Tip the Pizza Delivery Guy," probably especially valuable these days, which turns out to be a humorous meditation on open-mindedness and empathy.

Grade 8, you have wisdom at 13 and 14 years old that I still can't fathom. How is it that you have already made real in these speeches and in your lives the power of gratitude, love, joy, kindness, hope, resilience, patience, hard work, teamwork, loyalty, courage, optimism, curiosity, confidence, persistence, an open mind, giving back, and treasuring the beauty and friendship you have all around you. I would venture that the people sitting next to you right now have an awful lot to do with it. As is clear from the list, each piece is different because each of you is different in your infinite value. That is why each of you gives a graduation speech. And you will each in your individual way help to heal the world. *This I believe*.

THERE ARE SOME OTHERS TO THANK, WHO HAVE HELPED TO BUILD A COMMUNITY OF TRUST:

And if I leave anybody out, there is this great benefit we now have with Zoom that we wouldn't have in the Great Hall. In this graduating class, we have both the outgoing and incoming President of the Parents Association. It is no coincidence that this class is attached to two parents who have given so much to this school, Katherine Lucas (Evan '20, Mason '29, and Emma '29) and Kit Ballenger (Josh '20 and Charlie '22) who will both be on the Board of Trustees next year, Kit as President of the Parents Association and Katherine as an Elected Trustee. Suzanne Clark (Elice '20) has long been a vital member of the school's Board of Trustees.

And thank you to the Grade 8 Room Parents: Vee Solomon (Wesley '20

and Christopher '22), Paige Kevill (Weston W'13 and Giles '20), and Annie Sabel (Jack '20 and Morgan '24), for shepherding the Family Fun Day fundraiser and for organizing the many requests for Grate Patrol supplies and special treats for your children. Vee, as a member of the Parents of Black Students Association, you also gave us the most powerful gift of the video that accompanied Head of School Peter Barrett's spring letter. As he noted, the combination of fists in the air and loving hands on your children's heads reminds us all what we are fighting for.

I wish I could shout out each of the parents, just as I would like to thank every faculty member at the MacArthur Campus for, in truly

Under Grade 8 humanities teacher Ms. Elmore's care, you have polished every tool in the writing toolbox. You have learned how to organize, how to transition, how to elaborate, how to build an argument. And, especially in this exercise, you have learned how to use mentor texts. It's time to hear from you Grade 8 students.



biblical terms, putting aside every weight and running what was indeed a race of glory against time to create a rich remote curriculum and caring every single day about your children.

And last, I cannot not thank Associate Head of School/Head of Middle School Dan Spector and Assistant Head of Middle School/Director of Secondary School Placement Amy Yount '77, who have been much more than mentors during my time here. As they take the full reins of MacArthur Campus, their vision, wisdom, and great hearts, working with the legendary faculty, will ensure new heights of excellence.

Grade 8 Tributes

This I Believe

In a beloved Graduation tradition, each Grade 8 student offers individual remarks to the gathering of immediate family and faculty and staff, this year over Zoom. Our Grade 8 students were asked to commit to a value or values that they believe in that take the form of short essays entitled “This I Believe,” modeled after the 1950’s radio program of the same name. Rather than being an impediment, delivering these speeches remotely brought even greater focus to the words of each graduate, which, as always, elicited delight, insight, and inspiration for, those assembled. We share them here in one more demonstration of the love we feel for the Class of 2020 in full and the esteem in which we hold each individual member.



ISABELLA AGUIRRE

What is a mother's love? I believe it is when she takes care of her child with all the love in her heart. When she does anything for the well-being and happiness of her child. A mother's love is keeping her child's imagination alive. I would like to share a memory of when I realized my mother's love for me. I was seven years old, and it was the middle of the night. I had woken up because of a noise. I turned my head to the door and saw my mom walking out. At first I was confused why she was in my room, but then I stuck my hand under my pillow and found money and a note from the "tooth fairy."

I put two-and-two together and figured out that the tooth fairy was not real and my mom pretended to be her. I sobbed my way to my mom's room to tell her that she could stop pretending to be the tooth fairy. I was so sad about this because it had changed my life. I had lost a part of my imagination. I used to believe everything anyone told me, but after this event I started to question things people told me, like Santa Claus. Now that I am older, I realize the amount of love in my mom's actions. My mom could've just told me the tooth fairy was not real. Instead for three years, my mom would stay up until I fell asleep to meticulously sneak a small note packed with love and a crisp dollar under my pillow. Even though the realization brought some tough realizations to my young mind, it helped me become a better person. *I became kinder,*

I think before I say something, and I do not believe everything everyone says, for the better. Love is not just saying I love you. Love is opening your heart to someone so they can live a better, happier life.

JOSH BALLENGER

When I was seven, my parents took my sister and me on a vacation. This trip, however, was not a regular trip, like going somewhere warm and having a nice, relaxing holiday. My parents took us to Glacier National Park, a beautiful place in Montana, where really the only thing to do during the summer was to hike. For both of my parents, who were very experienced hikers and backpackers, this trip was right up their alley, but a week and a half of hiking was *not exactly* a thrilling concept to a seven- and a five-year-old. However, I think my parents introduced this amazing pastime to me in the perfect way, and it has since changed my life. Through hiking, I learned to believe in myself and in the value of a good walk.

My first encounter with hiking that broke through my stubborn resentment was a few days in. It was a sweltering summer day, and the trail had seemed to go on and on. However, there was a sudden change in the environment. I could feel the air get even more humid, I started to catch rays of sunlight as the foliage thinned. As I reached the crest of the final hill, I burst out to an incredible view, my first destination that I felt was worth the work to get to. At that moment, even though I was looking up

towards looming mountains, I felt on top of the world.

Hiking has, literally, taken me on my highest of highs. Summiting my first 14,000-foot mountain a few years ago continues to be one of the most monumental moments of my life. Looking back now, I see that, along with the memories, hiking has also given me my most treasured values. It has taught me perseverance and built confidence in my abilities. It has helped me appreciate the things around me. It has taught me to take risks. It has shown me how to set goals for myself and then push myself to reach those goals. *I believe in taking a break from it all to go outdoors and taking a good walk.*

HANNAH BRAHIMI

Over time, my thoughts on togetherness and teamwork have changed. This change began on a very exciting Sunday. I had always known teamwork was important, but this was the day that I noticed where togetherness came into the equation. Although they may seem similar, teamwork and togetherness are different. The Oxford Dictionary definition of teamwork is "the combined action of a group of people, especially when effective and efficient." This implies that teamwork can be achieved between total strangers. All you need is effort. However, the definition of togetherness is "the state of being close to another person or other people." Togetherness is more than just effort. Togetherness is achieved when a group of people or a team truly comes together

as one.

In the last game of the tournament, many of us had little hope due to the fact that we were playing against a team who had beaten us earlier in the season. At the end of the game, we were at a draw, knowing it meant overtime. Going into overtime, many of us had lost all confidence. Our eccentric captain, Sage, was very good at giving pep talks and boosting our confidence. I was on edge, afraid of what could happen. However, I felt significantly more confident because I knew we could trust each other. As a goalkeeper, seeing the balance and unity of our team on the field changed the view of the team. The two captains kept hyping people up, causing all of us to gain energy until the last second. I knew the team had a new balance and togetherness, which made us play better. We knew that it was a joint effort and that if we lost, it would be everyone's fault and that we had all contributed. I knew that everyone had a job.

I had a job, with the defender, to stop the ball, and the forwards and midfielders had a job to keep the ball up. We had always had teamwork, even when we first met, but only in that moment did we come together. Winning the finals brought the team together and made us better as a whole. We continued to work, and hopefully will keep working, well. *Togetherness truly is the key to success. This I believe.*



VIOLET BURKS

I believe that being patient and loving while my grandmother, Lulu, suffers from Alzheimer's disease is the most important gift I can give to her in the last years of her life. About two years ago, both of my grandmothers came to visit for Mother's Day. On my mom's side is Lulu, and on my dad's is BB. My grandmother, Lulu, had recently been showing signs of Alzheimers, and I had not been around her since before then.

Lulu had always been what you would call a "perfect" grandmother. She could answer any question, she brought presents, and she was always full of life and joy. I wasn't aware of all the effects of Alzheimer's disease on Lulu and didn't know what to expect. I felt nervous as I watched her taxi cab pull up to my house, but I noticed that her outward appearance, from her perfect hair and makeup to her brightly colored outfit, looked like everything I remembered.

I immediately felt calm when I saw Lulu's familiar smile as she embraced me in a hug. She paused and asked, "Now, tell me how old you are again?" My anxiety level started rising, but I calmly answered her question. My brother and I then traveled into the dining room with Lulu to play cards and catch up on everything. We had just started a card game when, again, Lulu asked, "Violet and Will, could you remind me of your ages again?" It felt like time had stopped. I was confused and nervous, and everything felt so unfamiliar. Memories with Lulu full of life and

joy swirled around my head and everything seemed upside down. Suddenly I looked across the table at my grandmother's familiar loving face smiling at me, and the right words came. I answered her question like it had never been asked before.

In that moment I realized that what Lulu needs is someone who will listen and be patient while she works things out in her mind. It is hard for my family and I to accept the reality of Lulu's illness, and with that we do all that we can to make her feel loved. Lulu is losing her memory as I grow up, and now she is the one asking questions. It makes me sad to watch her mind fade away, but I also feel blessed to be able to show her love and compassion while she is still here.

GEORGE FOSTER

My journey started during my Kindergarten application process, even though I don't remember much about the process because it was so long ago. However, what I do remember is that I was very partial to St. Patrick's. I remember seeing the building for the first time and being a little intimidated, but I knew I would make the most of it. I remember meeting all of the people that I have spent the last nine years with. These were people who would mold me into the person I am today. One person in particular who shaped who I am is Avery McHenry, because he has made me stop second-guessing myself by making quick decisions and following through on them. He has also made me more

confident.

Even at a young age, I knew I could trust myself and my feelings. My experiences have taught me a lot, as well. It was when I had to make a decision whether I would go to camp or not. I was 12 years old, I remember my mom walking up to me and saying, "George, you need to make a decision about camp before it's too late." I was nervous about going to camp. It would be the longest I had been away from home, but I decided to trust myself and tell her that I wanted to go. My time at camp was the best decision I made, because I had a great time and made a lot of friends.

I also have St. Patrick's to thank for helping me trust myself. When I ran for Student Leadership Council (SLC) I wasn't sure if anyone would like my ideas and policies, but I had to believe in myself and I won! During my time on SLC, I've contributed a lot. For example, I helped with the planning for an extended lunch and recess. I also extended our afternoon break by five minutes. After implementing these two ideas, I felt accomplished because I knew that I gave my fellow students what they wanted. *My experiences at St. Patrick's helped me. I learned that when I trust myself I can make the best decisions. This I believe.*

SOFIA GRUNWALDT

When I was younger, I absolutely, most definitely, hated writing. Shocking, right? I hated everything about it: the process, the hand-moving, the meticulous choice of words, and themes.

Before, then I had only dealt with essay writing; I never thought you could write a story and create characters and languages. Sure, I knew it was possible. I was an avid reader. But I didn't know I could create a world. I thought stories were written by gods, people who weren't kids, people who were special.

So I continued to hate writing until one fateful day. When I was in Grade 4, my teacher was Mr. Riley, and he told us to write a story, something to share with the class. I was appalled by the idea of writing. The first time he told us to write, I stubbornly did the bare minimum, thus I didn't enjoy it. Several weeks went by, then finally, one of his prompts hit the right note. I don't quite remember what the prompt was, but this one made me want to actually try and write a story. I stared at my notebook, and so many ideas and explosions were going off in my head. It was like thousands of small fireworks going off. I still remember the story I started that day, "The Eye of the Onyx." I was invested in the idea of creating a world. I even volunteered to read it out to the class, and everyone was impressed. In that moment, I felt proud of what I had done, and I realized I loved to write.

Without this experience, I wouldn't have opened myself up to new things. Many of the things that bring me joy—writing, sci-fi shows like the X-Files and Stranger Things, science, and drawing—would be lost on me. I had a tendency to be extremely stubborn, and I still am (a little bit), but not as much as I used to be. In the immortal words of

Mrs. Adams, “Don’t wait for your Mr. Riley,” *I believe that you should try out things that you think you might not like!* In the end, you might find a spark in something you would have never thought you’d enjoy.

ALISON HEIM

I believe that love withstands no matter the distance. Ever since I was a baby, I have always had a blanket named “Blankie” that has never left my side. I believed that I could not sleep without Blankie. You see, Blankie was more than just a blanket; it was a symbol of love, security, and was and still is what I cry into when I am upset. I needed it so I could feel comforted as I slept and when my parents were at work.

About 10 years ago, when I was in PreKindergarten at Beauvoir, we had nap time everyday. We were allowed to bring one “lovie” to cuddle with so we could rest (not that I was actually resting). Since my parents couldn’t come to PreK with me, I brought Blankie. Every day I would bring Blankie home from school. However, one day I accidentally left Blankie at school. I did not notice it was missing until it was bedtime. When it suddenly hit me that I wouldn’t feel love as I slept, I freaked out. I thought that I needed Blankie in order to sleep. My parents came into my room, and I cried for a long time, as I was really upset. At the time, I was young and thought that love only lasted while you were with someone or something. If my parents couldn’t be with me while I slept, and I didn’t have

Blankie, what was I going to do? Who or what was going to love me? They consoled me and told me that it would be alright. They let me know that even when I am not with them, they still love me.

From that day onward, I knew that love is a strong force that lasts forever. Love lasts no matter the distance. It is a feeling with no barrier. Love isn’t a physical thing like a blanket. Instead it is a force. I also learned that there are some things you think you can’t live without, but sometimes you get surprised. I also learned that my parents (might) love me more than a blanket does.

TOPPER HOWSON

I believe that enthusiasm is the most important thing when undergoing change. When experiencing change, one must figure out how to adapt in order to fit into an unfamiliar environment. Enthusiasm is a big part of my personality. Because I am about to experience a big change when I go to high school, I will need to be enthusiastic and true to myself. My transition to high school reminds me of my first time at the MacArthur Campus. As a wide-eyed 11-year-old, I felt strange. There was a mix of curiosity and anxiety, but enthusiasm helped me make the adjustment.

However, my enthusiasm soon devolved into dedication to changing myself. I thought, “New building, new me!” and thought that change meant making a splash, despite my reserved personality. I realized I was wrong. Instead of changing to your

environment, you need to add dimensions to your personality and go with the flow. And, most importantly, you need an open mind. I added positive aspects to my already-enthusiastic personality. Going through change made me realize that I was going to have to take care of myself sometimes, so I matured and became a little more independent. After that transitional experience, I began to understand the basics of dealing with change. It taught me how to act when faced with new environments and challenges. It taught me how to adapt. I learned how important enthusiasm is when undergoing change. It taught me how to act responsibly and be ready.

Now, I need enthusiasm more than ever. I am about to experience a big change: starting high school. I needed my experience at MacArthur Campus to occur in order to drive me forward. I’m glad that I’ve had some experience beforehand. Although it is not exactly the same, through the passage of time, I have built upon my realizations. While I have never experienced a change on this level, I have matured. At least I think I have. Everyone changes at some point, like we are experiencing now. So remember, always stay enthusiastic.

NINA ISLES

When I was 11 years old, my mom signed me up for a summer camp in International Falls, Minnesota. About a week into camp, we went on canoe trips. This lasted 11

days. Eleven days in Quetico National Park, Canada, with no one around for miles and miles as an 11-year-old. There were places along the trail where the water was too rough, so we would pull the canoes and all of the supplies out of the water and carry them on our heads and backs. This was called portaging. The canoes and their contents were heavier than they seemed. Imagine carrying four girls’ suitcases plus a tent, all in one backpack, and wooden crates full of pots and pans and jars.

Our first portage happened to be the second-longest of the entire trip. I had no idea what I was in for. When we came up to the rapids, we paddled our canoes almost to shore. This was to protect the canoes from scratching. However, the water below was still several inches deep. It would come up past my hiking boots. When I got up on land, boots soaked, a counselor hoisted one of the crates onto my back and pulled the support strap over my forehead, and I set off down the trail.

My heavy boots squelched with warm water every step, the sun bore down on me in my full-length pants and raincoat, and mosquitoes swarmed. My neck, shoulders, and legs strained to support the heavy weight as it dug into my spine. At some point, I lost the trail. Miserable and tired, I wanted to throw down the crate and cry. As I stood in the woods, I realized that my trip-mates were counting on me to carry these supplies. I knew I had to make it to the end. With new motivation, I strode through the woods. The sun wasn’t as hot, the

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box wasn't as heavy, and my feet weren't as tired. I quickly found the trail and, eventually, I heard the rushing water again. When I reached the other side and saw my friends, I placed the box down and began grinning. I was the proudest I have ever been in my life. I had pushed myself past what I thought possible, even though there was no other reward than knowing what I had accomplished. That was enough. *I believe in perseverance.*

RYAN JACKSON

I believe that friendship is one of the most important things in life. A quote that I feel connected to is, "You don't earn loyalty in a day. You earn loyalty day-by-day," by Jeffrey Gitomer. A time that I experienced this quote was in art class in Grade 6. I was assigned a table with a few of my friends. Sydney and I had already been friends for seven years, and I was happy to be seated at a table with her; it was easy to talk to her. The people right next to us were not close to me. As days went by, we started getting more comfortable with each other and sharing stories and dreams that we had experienced. Art was slowly, day-by-day, lesson-by-lesson, becoming our favorite class. We had shared scary and funny stories and happy dreams. Storytelling to pass time in art had created a bond between all of us that we still think about to this day. This bond was created because we all talked about something that we had in common: Dreams.

To this day, when someone brings up the

funny story about my friends' crazy dreams, our faces light up. As it was happening, I was thinking about all the good times we would have later. Telling dreams was an art class-only activity and also the building blocks for a loyal friendship between us. For example, my St. Patrick's friends have supported me by always making classes entertaining for me. I have tried to not let little arguments or being mad at a person get in the way of a friendship, because one thing could ruin it all, and I don't want to ruin any of it. I always think about this with the friends I have right now.

Jeffrey Gitomer is right. Day-by-day, we earned loyalty to each other. Friendship is one of the most important things in life. Even moments as simple as a Grade 6 art class never fade. I feel like these people are going to be with me forever. No matter where I go or who I am, they will always be in contact with me. I have a strong feeling that I will know my friends for the rest of my life. We'll make more memories as life goes on, and we'll have more fun. I learned that friendship is important and that people can bond over the littlest things and that bond can last for a long time.

SIENNA JOUBRAN

I believe that giving a name is one of the most profound ways to show love. I was three years old, and all my family had been talking about was finding a name for my soon-to-be baby brother. My parents would ask me for ideas, and

of course my little-girl self wanted to name him Rainbow. After that, I think they gave up on asking me for names. However, one night, I had a dream, and I would like to share that with you. I remember seeing my parents' silhouettes facing each other in front of a beautiful watercolor-like background. I heard them say, "I can't wait for Deegan to be born." So the next morning I told my parents my brother's name is Deegan. They researched it and discovered that Deegan is an Irish clan's surname that means "black-haired." My Grandma Eileen's family is from that area of Ireland, and my brother was born with a full head of jet-black hair. I had never heard the name Deegan before, so I'm not sure how the name ended up in my dream, but I'm glad it did because "Deegan" suits my brother.

People say that a person's name is one of their most treasured words because our names belong to and identify us. This experience has made me realize that naming someone is an act of love. My brother and I will forever be connected in this way. Not only did I show my love in naming Deegan, but now I show my love to my family by trying to take on more responsibility and helping out whenever I can. It is clear how much support is shown between us and for that I am extremely lucky. No matter what name a person may be given, I believe love is shown through that act, and there are hundreds of other ways I want to show love to all my family and friends.

GILES KEVILL

I have faith in hope, perseverance, and strength. I believe that these attributes will help people through life.

The one that I believe is most worthwhile is hope. Without hope, you can't work through struggles to be successful, because to become successful you have to go through hardship. To be able to go through pain and hardship with your dreams intact, you need hope. One time when I needed hope was when my older brother Weston was sick and in the hospital. I was scared, and it affected me more than I wanted my parents to know. His hospital stay was confusing to me, because I didn't understand what was happening to him.

I was easily scared, and I made up terrible scenarios in my head. However, that all changed when my grandmother Barbara came to visit. She had always supported me, and she helped me understand what I was confused about. After my brother was released from the hospital, we (my brother, grandmother, mom, and myself) spent a long time talking. Grandma seemed calm and hopeful about Weston's situation. She told me to not worry because there was no chance that my brother would die. She told me, "Everything is going to be okay. It might be difficult right now, but it will be okay." Feeling that hope and hearing those reassuring words from a person that I respect and trust made me feel better about Weston's situation and health. From that point on, I had complete certainty that my brother

would get better. Her words gave me the hope that I so desperately needed. I was indubitably confident that he would get better, and my happiness soared. And it was no surprise at all when he got better. Because I knew that he would.

I have never forgotten the hope that my grandmother gave me at a time I needed it so desperately. I have carried it with me since that day. I know that I will have to hold on to hope for the best outcome for the rest of my life. This I believe.

ELICE LEBEDEV

Every single day at recess time during our lunch break, a couple friends and I would always sprint up the stairwell to get to the green couches. We met there everyday, never missed it. I have countless memories there. But I want to specifically talk about the last time I remember sitting at the green couches and why that moment is important to me. I shared many happy, sad, and funny memories on the green couches. I chose this story to tell today to 1) lighten up the mood a little and 2) show the value of treasuring happy moments when you are in them. The last time I ever remember sitting on the green couches was after a lunch period, so we had 20 minutes to hang out. We had an unusual amount of energy, and we were all jumping all over the place acting crazy. Then a second went by and Sydney fell off the glass table in the middle of both couches, causing the group to go silent, and then burst out in laughter!

Now, Sydney falling is not what's important about this story. What is important is the memory itself. You see, my time at the green couches and when Sydney fell happened right before we went to distance learning; I had no idea that that was going to be the last time we would all be together. Looking back on my times at the green couches, I realize I did not know how much I would value my time there when I looked back at it.

Recently I have been reflecting on this. Sometimes during fun moments I might think to myself I am going to be sad when this is over. But now I realize that instead of looking at this in a negative way, I need to start thinking in that moment about why I value it. *As I sat writing this speech, I learned that I believe I should not take anything for granted and need to value moments with family and friends.* I learned that I have to stop sometimes and realize, "this moment is so good," and "I am so happy." It means appreciating these moments with my family and friends *right then* and realizing how important they are.

EVAN LUCAS

I believe that you grow through your hardest times by taking time to reflect on those difficult experiences. You also learn to appreciate new things, and those things can help counter the hardship and break you out of patterns you had before.

At the beginning of Grade 8, my dog, Gertie, died suddenly for unexplained reasons. She was only five years old, and

we thought she was healthy. However, she got sick and died within a week. I was able to be with her when she passed at the vet's, but she wasn't with us that whole week leading up to her dying, because the vets kept saying that she might be getting better. Her death made me feel lost and upset because my home felt very still and quiet. It was empty without Gertie there. I had a general feeling of being off and disconnected from everything else going on in my life. My life changed suddenly. I learned that sometimes life doesn't go the way you expect, and something bad can happen without any warning.

Now, even though I am extremely disappointed that we didn't get to enjoy all of those years with her, I also learned that going through something really hard can be a growing experience. My friends and teachers were all very supportive, and that helped me reconnect. I was able to feel grief for her, but then I put my energy back into positive things like my hobbies and other interests. For example, I continue to enjoy drawing and art; I even drew my new dog recently for a high school application essay. The experience of losing Gertie made me grow up and feel like I can get through the next hard challenge that will happen in my life.

I've realized that life does get back to normal again, even though I still miss Gertie. I also learned to be supportive of people who go through hard times, because it really does make someone feel better when you show that you care. So the next time you experience

something bad in life, you can remember the good that happened when you got through it and how you felt about yourself and others after the experience.

KATE LUGAR

When I was nine years old, my cousin Caroline passed away from osteosarcoma, a bone cancer. For the longest time, I thought it was something I did, and I could never figure out why it happened. Why would God take someone who is so dear to me, who I loved with all my heart? Although it is now five years later, I still do not have the answer to this question. But I do have a better understanding. Every night for 12 weeks, I have taken a picture of a sunset. Whether it rains or is cloudy or the brightest sun, I have been there. There has been a recurring theme. It only gets prettier and brighter after the sun sets. This is what I think it was like after my cousin passed. Her light only got brighter. All my work with St. Baldricks, all the events that we've held and the money that we have raised, have only made Caroline's light that much brighter.

Looking back now, I see that Caroline's light did not go out when she left Earth. Her light now is much better and brighter because we fulfilled her one wish, to raise awareness about her disease and to give hope to children like her. Five years later, I realize now that Caroline will always be a part of me. The light of her life continues to shine in mine; I am the person I am today because of her motivation. Her light was



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always so contagious and, no matter the circumstances she was in, she would always have the brightest smile on her face.

Because of her, I am so enthusiastic about community service. She opened my eyes to see that the world around us is hurting and no one will stand up to make a difference. You need to make a difference. And that's what I've tried to do. By cutting my hair, and raising money, as well as awareness, I have made her light brighter. It is like a sunset, the view only gets prettier when the sun is gone. It does not go straight to darkness, but slowly fades into bright pink and purple. *I believe that when you think of losing a loved one, don't think that it will just be darkness, because they haven't reached their brightest point.*

AVERY MCHENRY

I'd like to share my thoughts about dreams. My suggestion to you is to follow every dream you have in life. *I believe that when I have a dream I should always try to achieve it.* When I was eight years old, I had this dream of going to the West Coast to visit my uncle in California. This dream began because when my uncle would visit us from San Francisco, he would always bring all these cool gifts.

Almost every day, I would talk with my parents about going to California. I had never wanted something so bad in my life before. When I would look at pictures of California, I would see the huge redwood forests and imagine myself

surrounded by nature's smells. I even started saving my money in the Ghirardelli box for a trip to San Francisco in the future. Later that year, at Christmas time, my mom and dad surprised our family with a trip they were planning to California in the summer. I still have the posterboard my mom made to show us where we were going to go. The money I had saved ended up in my bank account, but it taught me that I can work for a dream and it taught me how to take action.

Dreams are important to me because they shape me as a human being. If not for them, I feel like there would be nothing to look forward to achieving and working towards. My dreams give me hope and help me work harder. I am always thinking of dreams and what I can do to achieve them. For example, my next big dream is to work hard in high school and get into the college of my choosing. I will accomplish this dream by working hard in school with everything I learned from St Patrick's. My dreams occupy my thoughts when I am bored and I get excited thinking about them. I believe that dreams will have an effect on my entire life. Dreams helped me become the person I am today, because I learned how to act.

ERIN MORERA

To many of us competitive people, winning is everything, but there is so much more to life than a gold medal or blue ribbon. In fact, sometimes the most important thing is that

you are dedicated to doing something you love, and most of the time, success will come along with enough hard work. For me, that special thing I love is horseback riding.

Last summer, I attended the Vermont Summer Festival on my new pony, Roxy. I was so excited not only to compete and have fun with my friends, but also win a couple champion ribbons. I walked into the ring to compete, and we headed to the first jump. As we approached, Roxy began to hesitate. We were ready to take off, when we made a sharp turn and avoided the jump. Refusing a jump almost always results in last place! My hopes of success shrank as the number of refusals increased.

At the time, I was frustrated that I could not get Roxy to jump. I wanted to prove that I could ride a difficult pony and succeed. I didn't want to give up. I spent the rest of my time in Vermont working to figure out how to ride Roxy. I was determined to overcome this challenge, even if it meant going into the show ring and failing. Finally, everything clicked. We went around the ring confidently, jumped all the jumps, and even won some blue ribbons. At the end of the day, I realized that the reason I loved this sport is not because of all the blue ribbons, but because of the challenges you and your equine partner overcome to form a bond that lasts forever. *Although it is nice to see your hard work pay off, I now believe that as long as I am dedicated to doing what I love most, I am already successful.*

BELA PATEL

"Friends are the family you choose." - Edna Buchanan. In most cases I would agree. You look for friends that share your hobbies and interests. However, in the case of St. Patrick's, I disagree. When I started attending St. Patrick's, I was three years old and I am now 14 and graduating with many of the people I began with. I have become friends with all 32 students in our graduating class because I know so much about them all. The constant interactions with our classmates we have had for 11 years may not have made us friends by choice, but have allowed us to become family. St. Patrick's has given us a stronger group of friends than I believe any other school would have. They are truly my family.

I remember my last day at St. Patrick's clearly before leaving for my study program in Europe, where I would spend three months. Honestly, I was excited to leave. The day before Christmas Break, I said all of my goodbyes to my MacArthur Campus family. Naturally, part of me was extremely sad, but I still felt excited because I wanted to get away and meet new people. While driving to the airport, I had a realization. I wouldn't be seeing my friends, my family, and the St. Patrick's community for months! I remember sitting in the car crying with my mom. I didn't want to go anymore. For weeks before that, I had been so excited to leave but in that moment I realized the loyalty and respect I

felt towards my classmates. That sadness didn't last long, though. In just a couple weeks, I was having fun with my new friends from my study program. However, this didn't mean I thought any less of my friends at home. I would often think of my memories at St. Patrick's. I will never forget the excitement before soccer and lacrosse games, blasting music in the back of the bus to get us eager to win a game. When I thought of memories like these, I felt joy because I knew that wherever I was in the world I would have those memories.

I believe that the best friendships are the people that you get to know and accept for who they are. No matter how annoyed you are at them, you know that they will always be family. Over the years, I've had the opportunity to get to know everyone very well, not just a group of people but together we should all be a community and that's what St. Patrick's is. I am proud of all of my classmates for opening up and getting to know everyone so well.

ISA RODRIGUEZ

I believe that education is the key to develop my unique gifts and contribute to making this a better world. I have come to believe in the value of education through powerful examples of determination and hard work from several generations in my family. My grandmother, Rosana Rodriguez, shared with me this piece of wisdom: "Every person is precious and God gives each person special gifts to share with one another and to make life better for

all of us." During my time at St. Patrick's, I have had an opportunity to develop my gifts through learning.

I learned the value of education and positive contributions to a community from my family. For example, my maternal grandmother, Carmen, drove her six children across the Mexico border every day for two hours so that they could have a better education. My paternal great-grandmother, Dolores, moved her family from the Dominican Republic to America so that her daughter, Rosana, could be the first person in the family to go beyond the fourth grade. My grandmother later earned a PhD and became a teacher and psychologist. In my own home, I see great examples of using one's education to support the community. My mother, Rocío, and my father, Roberto, are both in the field of education and are helping to improve the lives of teachers and students in America. The unique gifts that I'm developing are an outcome from my determination and compassion for helping others. I am able to work on these gifts every time I enter a classroom and whenever I interact with my friends and teachers. My compassion about helping other people who are less fortunate has led me to be involved in community service, volunteering, and speaking out on behalf of others who are voiceless in society.

Now I am going to face a big challenge which is high school, but I know that my gifts of determination and compassion will only grow stronger as I meet new people and learn new

things. High school may be challenging, but I have successfully overcome many challenges before through determination and the enduring support of my family. I know I am ready to succeed in high school, accomplish my dreams, and give back to the family and community that I love.

JACK SABEL

What I've learned is that the required path to success is working hard. It sounds obvious, but I learned it is a first principle. It certainly has been the case in sports for me. When I was 12 years old, I had been playing soccer for five years and was still on the B team. I wanted to be on the A team, but my coaches didn't feel I was ready. I had been accepting their opinion and stayed put. But one year, I wasn't satisfied remaining on the B team. I was mad, first at the coaches, but then I realized that I should do something about it.

During the off-season before tryouts, I worked out with my dad and went to all of the coaches' camps. My dad and I went every day to play on the soccer field at Palisades Park. We passed the ball. I worked on my dribbling and shooting skills. I might not have always wanted to practice, but having a goal in mind kept me going. Then tryouts came around and I was really nervous. Before I went out on the field, my dad leaned over and whispered in my ear, "You're going to make it. Your hard work is going to pay off." My dad's belief in me gave me confidence in my abilities.

I ended up making the A team. What I learned from this experience is more than just related to sports. There are no ways around hard things, only through. Before I learned this lesson, I was confident that success would be easy. I've realized that committing myself to a goal and putting my all into it brings joy and satisfaction to my life. I should take that feeling of satisfaction as motivation to set new goals. It sounds like a cliché to say hard work is a key to success, but it is.

Sometimes to be successful you need to be smart, or creative, or just lucky, or all of them at once, and you can't always control these yourself. However, there are dreams that can be reached with hard work, and I know I can always control that.

HEAVEN SAMUEL

When I was six years old, I would often go to amusement parks with my family. Imagine it with me! Summertime, the hot sun beating down. Excitement and laughter are in the air. And the Samuel family is ready to take on all the rides at Dutch Wonderland! Whenever I would go to Dutch Wonderland, there would always be a great level of excitement before I entered the park. My brothers would always encourage me to ride the bigger rides even though sometimes they would not get on the rides themselves. And my younger sister would encourage me from her one-seat stroller by shimmying with enthusiasm. We all laid eyes on the

biggest rollercoaster in the park, standing tall at the opening of the fence surrounding the entire amusement park. I knew that as soon as I entered the park the biggest rollercoaster was the one we were going to be riding over and over again.

I especially loved this rollercoaster because my dad would always be in the seat next to me videoing and making jokes to take the nerves away. The love and excitement I felt during this ride always brought me joy. As we slowly inclined, so would my nerves, but my family never let my nerves overcome the amount of fun I was going to have. Whether they were making jokes or scaring me to build up fear, there was never a moment when I did not feel joy.

Now, what does an amusement park, family, and joy have to do with my perspective on the philosophy of life, or life in general? The best part of having joy is that it balances all of the other not-so-fun emotions that you can feel, especially during tough situations. *Even when situations do not go your way, being able to rely on the joy that you have experienced can allow you to look on the bright side rather than tearing yourself down.* There are so many chances to tear yourself down: situations that do not go your way, or mistakes that you make, or even unfair treatment that you have to learn to cope with. Learning the value of joy and experiencing an immense amount of this particular emotion helped me to overcome many challenges in life. While I'm on this rollercoaster of life, I

know my two older brothers are sitting behind me setting a positive example of how to cope with life's difficulties. I know my dad is always next to me allowing me to peacefully and joyfully walk through life, and my mom and my sister are strolling right behind them making sure that I am remembering joy and letting me know they always have my back. Especially during COVID-19, my family has found new ways to bond and grow closer as a family. I want to thank my family for teaching me joy.

SYDNEY SILVA

Over my many years, I have learned what friendship is. There are multiple qualities that create strong friendships, but I believe that the most significant is loyalty. During the spring season of lacrosse in Grade 6, I was living the life playing on both the varsity and JV. I was determined to get that ball in the goal. I ran for it, not looking at where I was headed. I heard the buzzer and then, "crack"! Suddenly, I was on the turf, crying out. Sydney ran over and got down on her knees to help. A crowd gathered around me, but all I remember is getting carried off the field. As we made our way to the sideline, there was not a moment when one of my friends was not by my side. Even making my way into the car, my friends helped me.

I was taken to the hospital that night, where I learned that I broke my foot. This experience was not as terrible as it could have been because of my

friends. When I started walking again, people still took the time to assist me. I recognized the support my friends showed and realized they helped because they cared. Their actions were a reminder that no matter what condition I was in they supported me. Returning to the field, whether I was playing or not, they encouraged me. Whether singing in art, laughing on the green couches, or eating Takis in the math room we have stayed together and supported one another through it all. To me, this is loyalty.

I believe that friendship requires both people to contribute. The ties of friendship are made strong through humor, respect, honesty, and compassion. Most importantly, I believe that the cornerstone of friendship is loyalty.

HENRY SINGER

I have always worked well by myself. When I was in Grade 5, I worked on the Dig Project, where each homeroom created a civilization and then tried to learn about another homeroom's civilization. Everyone was assigned a partner to work with. At the time, I had mixed feelings about my partner. I needed the extra help, but I did not work well with them. Now I realize that I can work with others while still staying true to myself and achieving my goals. I realize that we all have different gifts, and we should use them as best as we can.

During the project, I learned to work hard, be dedicated to what I do,

and have patience and understanding so I can accomplish wonderful things. The Dig Project was an interesting experience for me. I discovered that I need to be true to myself first, and I realized that I work well by myself. I helped my partner and, even if they didn't give back the same level of work and still got the same grade as me, I still learned important values such as understanding and patience.

These values should be carried into all parts of our lives, so we can grow as human beings. I received a good grade, because I worked hard. It does not matter that my partner got the same credit for less work, because I got what I deserved, and that was not relevant at that moment. I felt accomplished because of what I did. I realized that I am the one that I should worry about when it comes to grades and homework. I achieved my goals, and that is what mattered in the moment. *I valued, and still value, dedication and hard work.*

SYDNEY SMITH

What does tough love feel like? When I think of tough love, I think about people pushing me to do my hardest. I have been having these experiences all my life. *But I want to share with you a moment that really showed me what tough love means to me.*

It was the beginning of June, and I was waiting patiently for June 3 to come because that would be the day that I would turn six years old. I know six doesn't seem like an important number at all, but that was the age

that you needed to climb Mt. Katahdin, a mountain that my grandfather had climbed 50 times. I have always looked up to my grandfather, even though he is not with us anymore.

We had just parked in the parking lot to begin climbing Mt. Katahdin. We were making our way up the mountain, when I tripped on a root. I was slowly falling back towards the ground with my arms making fast circles trying to stop. I was terrified. I closed my eyes and hoped for everything to be okay, and when I fell it felt like I was falling on to a bean bag. My backpack was so big that I started rolling down the hill. Finally, I came to a stop, and when I stood up, felt a little dizzy. I kept moving like nothing happened. During the hike, I was getting tired. I tried not to show it, but my parents could tell so they asked, "Syd, do you want a piggyback?" Who can say no to a piggyback?! So I was about to get on my parent's back, but then Papa said, "She's old enough; she can walk". At that moment, I realized what tough love meant. Tough love was preparing me for the future.

So I kept on going. To this day, when I want to give up, I think of that hike and I keep going. Papa didn't think I was too young for this climb. Whenever I start to doubt myself, or people doubt me, or when I feel too tired to finish an assignment, I reflect on this experience and Papa's tough love. After three long, tiring days of climbing, we were finally back down on flat ground. My Papa was proud and satisfied with his youngest granddaughter's

accomplishment. I want to thank you, Papa, for all you have done for me in my life. Even though he is not still with us today, Papa's tough love gets me through tough times. *This I believe.*

VANESSA SNYDER

I believe that appreciating and finding time for family is the most important thing in life. A few months ago, my dog came home from surgery. I knew that she would be sedated and probably wearing a cone, but seeing it and knowing it are two very different things. I learned an important lesson that day. I learned that I believe in love and appreciation.

I remember walking into the living room and seeing Nora lying there, in her bed. Her leg, which had been shaved, was red and bandaged. It broke my heart to see her so helpless, and I broke down crying. I couldn't stand to leave her, but each time I looked at her I would just cry harder. I was upset because there was little I could do to help but hold her. And while holding her, I realized that this was the longest I had spent with her in a long time. I began to wonder, how much time do I spend with my family? Do I make the effort to spend time with my brother, Hugh? Do they know that I love them? I realized that I need to make an effort to spend more time with my family and Nora. I want them to know I love them.

I felt fiercely protective of my loved ones. In the moment, I realized how important it is to appreciate what you have right in front

of you, to appreciate your family and loved ones. They are the most important people in the world. I show my appreciation through words of affirmation and dedicating quality time to be spent with them. I am grateful for this experience because it has made me a better, more loving person. *I believe that one should appreciate the small moments, and show their love, so that they won't regret it later.*

WESLEY SOLOMON

At the beginning of Grade 8, I went to SkyZone. All of my friends were especially excited about SkyZone's giant trampoline dodgeball court. Traditionally, dodgeball is played on solid ground, but at SkyZone, we played on trampolines making it all the more interesting, fun, and competitive.

During one particular round, my team was on the ropes. We were losing horribly and we could not communicate. Everyone, including myself, was yelling at each other to catch a ball or get this person out. In all of the excitement, I accidentally hit a friend in the head. And it was not with one of the foam P.E. balls, it was a real dodgeball, like the one that stings and is painful if thrown incorrectly. As soon as I hit my friend, the mood of the game changed. When I saw what I had done, I felt horrible. I immediately went over to my friend and apologized and made sure she was okay. I had been so wrapped up in winning that I could not care about my own friends. At that moment, I realized that

I was playing a game and I did not need to try so hard. I could relax and didn't need to make this a competition. Often in life, we are blindly forced to compete against our peers, friends, and other schools. While playing the SkyZone game and making that mistake, I realized that everything is not a competition and that sometimes you can relax and let go. This was really important, especially as my fellow classmates and I competed to get into high schools. This was because even though each one of us was putting in numerous hours to get into our school of choice, we still made time for each other so we could relax and just be friends. As a human, I look forward to learning more lessons and experiences. *This I believe.*

HELEN TAYLOR

"What makes us stop asking questions?" When I was brainstorming for this piece, I was reflecting on my life and its defining moments. I realized that, as I have grown older, I have stopped asking questions as much. I used to capsize the boat to see what would happen and dive to the bottom of the lake to bring up handfuls of sand just to see what it was like. I do not know about you, but when I was younger I asked so many questions; I wanted to know how everything worked and why. I wasn't afraid to ask. Now, as I think about it, I ask myself "What made me stop asking questions?"

I do not think this is because of a natural loss of curiosity. I think this is because, as we grow into



adolescence, we become more insecure because the world tells us that we should already know all the answers. As we mature we become increasingly aware of what other people think of us. This is natural, as our view of the world shifts from being centered around only ourselves to focusing more on others. It isn't that we don't want the answers, it is that we feel ashamed to ask the questions. I think this is how we slowly lose our ability to question things as we grow up. We forget how to be curious, and this loss is never acknowledged. When I think about this, I see that I submitted to societal expectations. I complied with the standards, and I doubted myself. This made me realize that I am in control of my own actions. Knowing this, I can try to keep from falling victim to the same self-doubt and insecurities that caused me to stop asking questions. I will not be afraid to explore questions and search for the answers. Why do people think the way they do? Is there such a thing as good and evil or is it just our perception? And can anyone see our sun as a star in their night sky? Humans wouldn't be where they are today without curiosity and its effects. *I encourage you all to not let your curiosity be suppressed and to let your mind wander and ask questions. This I believe.*

CECELIA TRAVERS

I believe that beauty can be found anywhere. My grandmother, "Stu," taught me this. She is the type of grandmother who has

you pause to appreciate a wildflower blooming in a parking lot. I spent my childhood Easters in Kentucky visiting my grandparents. The most delicious homemade iced cookies, a full sandbox, and tickets to the zoo are things I always looked forward to. These are some of my happiest childhood memories. As the years went by, I became more aware of my grandmother's comings and goings. One morning, she was leaving with a tape recorder and a stack of children's books. We were her only grandchildren, where could she be going? She was going to a women's prison to record mothers read to their children. I remember this exchange perfectly, though only eight, as it revealed a universe where a child went to bed without a mother. I learned that this simple act was in fact a gift of love and that love could be found anywhere, even in darkness.

When you are eight years old, prison is a place you do not think about much. Prison was a dark place, right? My grandmother painted a brighter picture. Mothers lived in prisons, missed their children, and children missed their mothers. They were women who had or had not made a mistake, but my grandmother, quick to forgive, extended the gift of care regardless if society thought worthy. My grandmother does this because of her love to help others, especially the ones that no one else was thinking about. She believes that good stories open your eyes to new places and perspectives and brings

people together. I know this because each month since I was little, she has been sending our family beautiful picture books that have brought our family to take a pause, sit with each other, and enjoy.

After that day, I realized giving feels better than receiving, even when nobody's looking. I learned that innocence is not lost with mistakes, and we can forgive. Now, I know I want to dedicate my life to helping others find joy even when it seems impossible. I am proud of my grandmother because she embodies grace in all that she does and all that she is. I understand that this goal is idealistic, but it is obtainable with the smallest of actions. Thanks to my grandmother, I now always put myself in others' shoes before I judge. I see love exists everywhere, even in places you would never truly think. My grandmother has taught me to forgive and to treat others with respect. I will certainly fall short of her, but I will not stop believing in the power of "once upon a time."

LOUISE TUCKER

I believe that small actions can really make someone feel loved. When I was seven years old, my family got a dog. Birdie is super-cute, but she would never really play or cuddle with me. She always would sleep with my parents and, no matter how hard I tried, she would never sleep with me. I felt sad. Ultimately, I felt like Birdie didn't love me.

However, one night Birdie came to my room, got on my bed, and fell asleep. I tried not to get too excited,

because I just thought she would leave sometime during the night. When I woke up, she was still there! So that meant she had spent the whole night with me. I was so happy. The small, insignificant action of Birdie spending the night was significant to me and made me feel loved by my dog.

Last year, in lacrosse, I struggled to score a goal. I felt defeated and unimportant, and I thought I was letting my teammates down. I was feeling the same way I had when Birdie didn't want to sleep on my bed. My teammates, however, were so supportive and set me up to score a goal by telling me where to go and by passing to me. Although I never scored, my teammates supported and encouraged me, making me feel special and loved. My teammates didn't have to help me, as they could have continued to score themselves, helping us win with even more points, but they chose to help me.

Looking back on these events, I realize that a small action like my dog sleeping on my bed, or friends supporting and encouraging me can make my day. The time Birdie spent the night with me made me feel like she cared and loved me. When my teammates supported me and tried to help me reach my potential, they made me feel special and cared about. Today, I try to do small actions to make my friends' and family's lives better and happier. I give compliments out of the blue to my friends and family to build them up. If my friends are sad, I show up for them and show them my love, like Birdie showed up that night and showed me her love.

Something small can make such a difference. I want my friends and family to know I love them and care for them, and I do that by showing up and by looking for the small actions just like Birdie's.

BILAL TURNER

I believe that all endings are beginnings. When something ends, something new, maybe even better, is born. On a windy September morning, I walked into my new school building to start Grade 4. Having friends was important to me, and I wanted to keep the same friends my whole life. It was my first day in my new school, and I knew nobody. My first day was a blur, and I don't remember much, but I do remember a St. Patrick's teacher showed me where to go. I stepped cautiously into a busy Lunch Room. Strangers. Everyone was a stranger to me. I remember walking to a table and sitting down. I sat and waited. The Lunch Room was an assortment of wooden tables with benches on each side. The same as my old school. That was the only similarity. Everything else was different.

Minutes later, I entered my homeroom, where I was greeted by my new teacher. This teacher was strict, but she taught me a valuable lesson: People will do things with the right motive in mind. Ms. Chu implemented a method of working where I would be allowed to take a small break after I finished an assignment. This timer system encouraged me to do my work and not slack off. This method has gotten me through many assignments. Ms. Chu, thank you.

One person who definitely changed my life was my tutor. She taught me in a similar fashion as Ms. Chu. She reinforced the idea of completing my work before doing anything else. Over the years, I experimented with different work methods, and sometimes I would need a timer. Sometimes I had to split it up into pieces and work with breaks. I value how I have changed and how you helped me grow. Thank you, Ms. T.

Another person who has greatly influenced my life—my sister, Aisha Turner. Aisha inspired me in school every day. While my first year was her last year at St. Patricks, she helped me get used to being at school because I already knew someone. She had great grades and was an amazing artist and a kind person. I admired my sister so much that I wanted to be like her, but I have now grown into my own person because I've had her as a role model. Thank you, Ish. By now, I have realized that many people have influenced who I have become. I have learned many new things that will help me in high school. Even though coming to St. Patricks ended my past friendships, my first day at school gave me many new experiences.

REID WINCUP

"If you want something you've never had, you must be willing to do something you've never done." – Thomas Jefferson.

On a foggy summer morning four years ago deep into the woods of the

North Carolina mountains, I started my very first day of camp. For those who have never gone to camp, it can be scary to leave your parents and try new activities you have never done. As a shy, small fourth grader with short braided hair, my light-blue camp shirt, and my twinkle-toe sneakers, I found myself wanting to do things I never tried before like zip-lining, rock-climbing, and making crafts, but I was scared to try. That's when I participated in an activity called Curiosity, which was an arts and crafts class, where we learned to make bracelets and bookmarks and necklaces. I realized two things that day. First, I was not good at making knots and second, I liked trying new things.

I realized that new things could bring me joy. As I sat trying to tie knots on a bracelet, I thought how fun it was even if I wasn't very good at it. *This made me believe that I could try other things even if I wouldn't be very good at them.* Over the summer, I decided to try: climbing, archery, and rafting, all of which opened new doors that brought joy.

Over my years at St. Patricks, I have tried many new things as well. I joined cross country for the first time in fifth grade and have continued through eighth grade. I tried a design-thinking club where we created fun, innovative ways to make our school better and presented our findings to the school administration. Trying new things means doing things other people think you can't do. For example, growing up, I was always extremely quiet, and I liked to listen to what others

had to say, without giving my opinion. Over the years, I have found my voice. This year I joined debate, and over the course of the year my public speaking has improved, and I am more confident when talking to crowds.

JOHN ZEGGER

If you know me, it's obvious that I have a peculiar interest in fish. Half my camera roll is full of pictures of me holding fish I caught, and whenever my family is planning a vacation, I try to sneak in a fishing trip. I have caught sharks, tuna, catfish, and trout and have even caught a fish during a solar eclipse. A few years ago, I was on a fishing mission. I found an area where the water was so shallow I could look into the water and see many fat and long carp and catfish. I was excited and could already see myself easily catching the fish and adding its picture to my camera roll. I quickly casted and waited for the fish to bite. But they didn't, and that's when I became obsessed with these fish. I had to catch them! When I came back the next day, the fish greeted me but did not bite on my bait. The same thing happened day after day until the fifth day, when something bit on my line! It turns out it was a snapping turtle, and I was forced to continue fishing.

However, on the final day, something did actually change. When I was walking to my fishing spot, instead of focusing on how to catch the fish, I instead looked around. During the past four days, I hadn't noticed the tall

green trees that swayed back and forth. For the first time, I noticed a baby turtle sitting on a log bathing in the sun and sliding into the cool water. Looking left, I noticed the large heron standing tall and patiently for an unsuspecting fish. I had missed the view of the sharp cliff that hung over a rushing river. I was too preoccupied with winning and catching the fish that I didn't see the beauty that was around me the entire time. It was then that I realized that sometimes it is good to lose.

Our minds can become so clouded with the thought of winning that we miss the beauty in what's around us. We must enjoy everything that we have in life so that when we lose, we can always smile and enjoy what we have. We have to admire the trees and the baby turtles around us instead

of lingering on what could have been.

This lesson relates to the end of our eighth grade year. We didn't go through middle school just for the letters on a report card, or a final handshake with Mr. Barrett. We did it for what came on the side. The lessons we learned, the trouble we got in, and the friendships we made. *So I encourage you to look around and take time to notice the gifts surrounding you the next time you can't catch a fish.*



CONGRATULATIONS, Grade 8 Class of 2020

Isabella Aguirre
Holy Child

Joshua Ballenger
Maret

Hannah Brahimi
St. Andrew's

Violet Burks
St. Andrew's

George Foster
Carolina Day (North Carolina)

Sofia Grunwaldt
Georgetown Day

Alison Heim
St. Andrew's

Topper Howson
St. Anselm's Abbey

Nina Isles
Maret

Ryan Jackson
Georgetown Visitation

Sienna Joubran
Sidwell Friends

Giles Kevill
Bullis

Elise Lebedev
Stone Ridge

Evan Lucas
Field

Kate Lugar
Holton-Arms

Avery McHenry
West Potomac High School

Erin Morera
Greenwich Academy (Connecticut)

Bela Patel
St. George's (Rhode Island)

Isa Rodriguez
St. Andrew's

Jack Sabel
St. Albans

Heaven Samuel
Potomac

Sydney Silva
Stone Ridge

Henry Singer
Bullis

Sydney Smith
Vail Mountain School (Colorado)

Vanessa Snyder
Queen Margaret College (Wellington, New Zealand)

Wesley Solomon
St. Albans

Helen Taylor
Madeira

Cecelia Travers
Madeira

Louise Tucker
Episcopal High School

Bilal Turner
Washington-Liberty High School

Reid Wincup
St. Andrew's

John Zegger
St. Albans

Congratulations to College-Bound Graduates from the Grade 6 Class of 2014 and Grade 8 Class of 2016

Riley Anderson
Smith College

Ike Bennet
Columbia University '25

Emma Bishop
College of Charleston

Laila Booker
Yale University

Ella Bruno
Boston College

Charles Carlson
*Southern Methodist
University*

Gregory Ensign
University of Maryland

Ludovico Fanizza
University of Guelph-Humber

Jesse Fishbein
University of Redlands

Margaret Gilbert
Syracuse University

Joey Graham
*Gap Year,
Harvard University '25*

Nina Greene
Spelman College

Selim Guadagni
Bucknell University

Bora Hayri
University of Miami

Sonia Hernandez
Wellesley College

Will Holland
Georgetown University



AnnaLena Hunter
Ohio Wesleyan University

Eden Jones
Hampton University

Alexander Kaye
Colby College

Kayla Laws
George Washington University

Olivia Lyall
University of Virginia

Emma Mansfield
*Washington and Lee
University*

Gardner McCabe
Tulane University

Colin McDermott
*St. Mary's College of
Maryland*

Cian McDonald
Boston College

Welles McHenry
*Gap Year,
Virginia Polytechnic Institute
and State University '25*

Luca Merotto
Denison University

Nina Moore
University of Maryland

Johnny Muller
Texas Christian University

Nolan Musslewhite
*Gap Year,
Princeton University '25*

Agye Nikoi
Texas Christian University

Carolina O'Leary
*Gap Year, Georgetown
University '25*

Caroline Patel
Tulane University

Dennis Perkins
Morehouse College

Katherine Pommerening
Dartmouth College

Constantin Pusch
Trinity College Dublin

Maddie Ray
Tulane University

Ayer Richmond
Wesleyan University

Will Rodman
Tulane University

Grayson Shaw
Cornell University

Theo Solter
Boston College

Conor Steel
University of Miami

Dylan Thompson
*Woodrow Wilson
High School '21,
Morehouse College '25*

Aisha Turner
Wake Forest University

Helen Walker
Georgetown University

Stone Walker
*St. Albans '21,
Columbia University '25*

Liam Warin
Northwestern University

Phoebe Weil
Wellesley College



TWO DECADES LATER, A DONOR'S GENEROSITY CONTINUES TO SPREAD JOY

Almost two decades ago, Mary Haft (Michael '99, Nicholas W'01, and Laura W'05) was working at the Book Fair as part of her role as President of the Parents Association. Watching a class of Grade 1 students enter the space, the children's faces alight with the delight of a room full of books, was captivating for her. At the same time, Mary, who was as engaged as any parent could be at her children's school, had a particular realization about the Book Fair—namely, that some children could not afford to participate fully in it by buying books to take home. Deeply committed to maintaining, and even expanding, St. Patrick's sense of warmth and welcome for all of its students, Mary recognized a chance to make a real difference in the lives of these young people in the context of a beloved school event.

Thus began the quiet giving of the opportunity each year for all students to purchase books for themselves, to build their own personal libraries—a practice that continued into this year's virtual Book Fair in the midst of the pandemic. Critically, she provided additional funds so that each child could also purchase a book that would be donated to the library in that child's name as part of the Library Giving Tree program. "Books have

the power to transform lives. Words matter," observed Mary recently. "You enter a different world when you open a book. You understand the dimensions of another's life by slipping into the character's skin. You gain insights into your own life, hopefully an increased sense of purpose and power and agency that comes from the inspiration of a book."

By providing funds for students participating in the Financial Aid Program, supported by the mission of St. Patrick's that encourages the love of reading and the act of giving, Mary's quiet efforts have helped build a culture that prizes the community that is intrinsic to the Day School experience. As a result, all students have long shared in the same experience during the Book Fair, which brings the joy and love of books to life.

It has been a particular thrill for Mary to watch quietly as the impact of her philanthropy has grown, year by year. On average, 80 students annually avail themselves of Mary's generosity and, as a direct result, take home a book that is theirs to enjoy and to keep. They also feel the dignity and joy of giving a new book for current and future students of

*“St. Patrick’s is ever-grateful for Mary’s
longstanding dedication to a cause so dear to her.
Hers is the kind of leadership that builds community,
strengthens institutions, and inspires others.”*

—PETER A. BARRETT, HEAD OF SCHOOL



MARY HAFT is a published author and founder of Haft Productions, who lives in Washington, D.C., with her husband Robert. She is co-founder of the Nantucket Book Festival & Foundation, where she serves as President, and is Vice-President of the PEN/Faulkner Foundation.

St. Patrick’s to experience in the Nursery School, Elementary School, and Middle School libraries. The tally of these generous grants supporting literacy and equity across almost 20 years has engaged more than a thousand St. Patrick’s readers at the Book Fair. Mary intends to continue this legacy and benefit ever-more St. Patrick’s students and the Day School’s libraries. “I intend to participate the rest of my life,” Mary said. She added, with a laugh, “I’ll have to make provisions in my will!”

While Mary has helped students build their own, and the Day School’s, library collections, she was also deeply involved in the building of the Elementary School Library itself, which sits atop the Whitehaven Campus academic addition completed in 2001. The look and feel of that wondrous space reflect Mary’s exquisite attention to detail during the design and construction phases. “That library project was a year of my life,” Mary said. “I was deeply invested in the research of the best practices for 21st century libraries. Our mission was to create a place of warmth and welcome, a respite to fall into the world of books. We were fortunate to have worked with a fantastic designer, Cheryl Ransone, whom [fellow parent of alumni, former Board of Trustees Chair, and close friend] Katherine Bradley had

discovered, who brought our hopes to life. It is a joy to see this living library that continues to serve and delight our St. Patrick’s students, teachers, and librarians.”

“This just might be one of the elements of my life that has brought the deepest kind of satisfaction and gratitude for the continued community and sense of belonging we all share in this wonderful world of St. Patrick’s,” Mary reflected. “My hope in revealing my role here is that perhaps this can be inspiration for another to look out at the world and see the small thing that can help create change. This literally is ‘the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.’ This was one small act, borne out of seeing a need and finding a way to help ensure every child was included. The power has been in seeing this gift grow, year by year, and realizing how many children have had the joy of owning their own books and the deep connection they share in helping to build the library of St. Patrick’s.”



"I find it truly remarkable that I graduated from St. Patrick's 30 years ago, and yet the school's mission and core values continue to be shared with current students with the same commitment as they were with my Class of 1990."

ALUMNI PROFILE BRYCE FORT '90

Putting St. Patrick's Values to Work in Africa

Bryce Fort '90 attended St. Patrick's from Grade 3 to Grade 6 and graduated from Sidwell Friends in 1996. He then went on to Lehigh University to earn his bachelor of science degree, cum laude, in computer engineering with a minor in economics. He remembers St. Patrick's as his favorite school with special fondness. After college, Bryce worked for the Deutsche Bank AG European Healthcare Corporate Finance Group, focusing on the pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and medical devices industries. Bryce went on to co-found the District-based Emerging Capital Partners (ECP), a private equity firm that seeks to raise money from international sources to provide growth equity to rapidly developing companies in Africa. ECP invests in a wide array of industries, including restaurants, retail, telecommunications, and media. Since ECP's founding 20 years ago, its funding has been directly responsible for creating 200,000 jobs in Africa. Bryce is particularly proud that the number of jobs created far exceeds the results of traditional nonprofit development or impact investing. He is excited to help create prosperity for African people and their families through the for-profit, commercial sector.

Bryce and his family live in Nairobi, Kenya, to be close to the work that means so much to him. He and his wife, Kelly, have two children, Connor and Kaitlyn. Although leisure moments can be hard to come by outside of career and family time, he prefers to be active and pursues kitesurfing, mountain-biking, skiing, and tennis. The family's adventurous spirit leads to a great deal of travel, and they have taken advantage of their Kenyan home base to explore Dubai, Thailand, Oman, and Tanzania. Bryce's interest in photography comes in handy as they explore places of natural beauty, memories that he preserves on film. The Forts also enjoy waterskiing, paddleboarding, and board games and highly recommend visiting the amazing beaches in Kenya!

Although a world away, Bryce recalls St. Patrick's traditions such as the Christmas Pageant, Grate Patrol, Grade 6 Musical, St. Etienne School in Haiti, and Science Fair fondly. These activities instilled in Bryce and his classmates the values of being good citizens and contributing members of society, embracing diversity beyond their community or country, and being well-rounded in their interests from the arts to the sciences. These principles connect them in a particularly strong way through their personal experiences as students at St. Patrick's to the present day as alumni who lead their adult lives consistently guided by them, which speaks to the timeless value of the Day School educational experience.

Bryce enjoys staying connected with St. Patrick's through alumni communications; bumping into former classmates, parents, and teachers when he is in town; and occasionally driving down Whitehaven Parkway to see campus changes in person. Like the rest of us, Bryce will always have a fondness for the St. Patrick's that remains regardless of the passage of time. Despite being far from the school both in distance and years, he still feels a part of the community and continues to support the Annual Fund.

Bryce is impressed that St. Patrick's continues to deliver on its mission through its commitment to diversity and to helping students develop integrity, empathy, and strong character in addition to promoting academic excellence. Time has proven to him personally how important and universal these values are, and they play out in his daily life as an expatriate supporting the incubation of business interests in the developing world. He attributes St. Patrick's consistent, lasting, and positive impact on its students and community to the diligence and creativity of teachers, administrators, and coaches; active engagement of parents; and also, importantly, the extended Day School community.

Alumni Notes



Devin Reese '75 and her father

1975

Devin Reese '75 is happily working as a science writer in various capacities (see writers.work/devinareese), hanging out with her teens in their fascinating worlds (robotics, chess, ultimate frisbee, crew, philosophy, London college), and helping take care of her dad. She lives in the D.C. area, having returned here with her first child in tow from Panama City, Panama, 19 years ago.

1985

Price Jessup '85 and his wife, Sandra, welcomed their son, Ryland Lee Jessup, into the world in August 2019.



Price Jessup '85, his wife, Sandra, and their son, Ryland Lee Jessup



David Langdon ex. '94

1994

During the summer of 2019, **David Langdon ex. '94** left his dream job leading social and digital media efforts at the University of Texas Athletics Department to join an 80-day sailing expedition from Hawaii to San Francisco. His charge was to support French-born, long-distance swimmer, and ocean advocate Ben Lecomte in his effort to swim 300 nautical miles through the Great Pacific Garbage Patch—the largest offshore accumulation zone of plastic in the ocean. This was not an expedition for records or fame, but rather one of awareness. The 300-nautical mile goal was a constant reminder—one nautical mile for every million tons of plastic produced globally each year, much of which ends up in our oceans. The research collected on this mission ultimately provided an extensive, high-definition

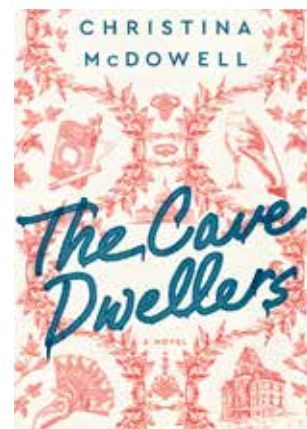
sampling on plastic pollution, forming the first-ever trans-Pacific data set.

1996

In addition to his professional duties, **Jonathan Nobil '96** was elected to serve as an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner in the District of Columbia's Ward 4D. More importantly, he and his wife Ashley welcomed Virginia Piper Nobil on June 11, 2019.



Piper Nobil, the daughter of Jonathan Nobil '96 and his wife, Ashley



1997

Christina McDowell '97 is an author whose second book—a novel, *The Cave Dwellers*—is scheduled to be published on May 25, 2021.

1998

William "Billy" Robinson '98 was a well-rounded student who was particularly drawn to activities including karate and drama, starring in the musical *Annie* during his final year at St. Patrick's. He went on to Georgetown Day, where he deepened his love for movement and was first introduced to dance. Billy went on to excel at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, studying both ballet and modern dance and earning the university's prestigious President's Award and the Outstanding Achievement in Modern Dance Award. He has trained and worked with the Martha Graham Dance Company, Momix, Group Motion, Wally Cardona, and many other well-renowned choreographers, including Paul Taylor, Elizabeth Streb, Diavolo, and Ishmael Houston Jones. He is



Joan MacDonald Schaefer '98 and Clay Schaefer ex. '96 and their three children

currently performing with Jumatau Poe, Jermone "Donte" Beacham, Shannon Murphy, Cardell Dance Theatre, and Brian Sanders' JUNK, as well as teaching dance at both Georgian Court University and the University of the Arts. Billy is also a dancewear entrepreneur, running his business, Dancewear On Broad, with his partner, Julia Higdon.

Joan MacDonald Schaefer '98 and her husband, fellow St. Patrick's alum **Clay Schaefer**, welcomed their third child in fall 2019. They are thrilled to have a house filled with energetic boys!

1999

Annie Campbell '99 graduated from Elon University with an M.Ed concentrating in gifted and talented education. She currently teaches at Lafayette Elementary School with St. Patrick's classmate **Cara Skubel '99**.



Annie Campbell '99



Alexandria Moore Montanio '03, her husband, Ian, and their first child, Easton Barrett Montanio

2003

In August 2020, **Alexandria Moore Montanio W'01, M'03** was promoted to Senior Associate in the health care and litigation practice groups at Gordon Feinblatt in Baltimore. She also serves as the firm's Corporate Social Responsibility Administrator. On November 7, 2020, Alexandria and her husband Ian welcomed their first child, Easton Barrett Montanio!

2004

Heather Gustafson ex. W'02 is the weekend news anchor on Saturday and Sunday nights at Fox 35 in Orlando.



2005

Peter Burnes '05 enjoyed visiting the MacArthur Campus last year to help Anne Tyler's music class with tips on producing music. Professionally, he continues his career in higher education

development at American University.

Maddie Ross W'03 is working on the front lines of the pandemic as Chief Resident in Emergency Medicine at LA County + USC Medical Center in Los Angeles. She is a forensic medical evaluator for Physicians for Human Rights, performing medical evaluations for asylum-seekers and treating migrants in Tijuana, Mexico (before closing of the border). Maddie's report and advocacy on the deadly impacts of the U.S. "Remain in Mexico" policy was featured on the PHR blog last winter, and her research on medical care of ICE detainees will be published in the new year. Maddie also is involved in the World Health Organization's efforts to establish emergency medicine systems in Africa. In 2019, she spent time with the African Federation of Emergency Medicine both teaching and learning in several hospitals in Cape Town, South Africa, and working on AFEM projects throughout Africa, including for the governments of Sudan and Egypt. In June, Maddie will be moving to Denver, where she will be a fellow in Global Emergency Medicine at University of Colorado.

2006

Evan Burnes '06 is working hard in Boston, representing the cybersecurity firm Rapid 7 and helping organizations keep their systems safe.

Metal sculptor **Dave Dunn '06** had his work introduced to New Orleans by patrons

Alumni Corner

on April 2, 2020. His pieces are in private collections in Washington, D.C., the Chesapeake Bay area, Los Angeles, New York, Shelter Island, Lexington, Austin, and Key West. His website is DunnInMetal.com/

Clinton James '06 and his wife Rachel welcomed their son Carty Charles James on January 26, 2020. Clinton, a Grade 6 social studies teacher, completed his master of education degree in administration and supervision at the University of Richmond. Clinton and his family live in Richmond, Virginia where his wife Rachel is a clinical coordinator. Carty is also the first grandchild of long-time St. Patrick's faculty member Mary Beth James and former faculty member Chuck James!



Clinton James '06, his wife, Rachel, and their son, Carty Charles James



Marissa Baly Simone W'06 and her husband Chris Simone on their wedding day

Adam McInturff W'04

is working as an amateur scouting video coordinator for the Toronto Blue Jays. Adam is engaged to Hayley Swan, and they will be married in October 2021.

2008

Marissa Baly Simone W'06 is married! In October 2019, she married Chris Simone on Maryland's Eastern Shore, with **Kira Reinke W'06** and **Lily Statzer W'06** standing by her side as two of her bridesmaids. Her brother, **Jared Baly '10**, was a groomsman and sang with the band for her first dance. When not hanging out with her husband Chris, Marissa is a manager at the American Enterprise Institute, where she manages their young donor programs and plans donor events and retreats.

Kevin Gardner '08

completed his master of science degree in geology at the University of Oregon and has begun his PhD in the Department of Earth Sciences there. He currently resides in Eugene, Oregon.

Colin Ross W'06 lives in New York City, where he is Assistant Director at Gray, a gallery founded in 1963 and dedicated to modern and contemporary art, with spaces in Chicago and New York. In his role, Colin helps research and organize exhibitions on artists represented by the gallery (such as David Hockney, Alex Katz, and McArthur Binion), works on editing and producing books, and assists with building and caring for the collections of private and institutional clients. Since completing

his master's in art history at Oxford University in 2017, Colin has contributed essays to two books and presented his research at UC Berkeley, the Courtauld Institute in London, and the Stavanger Art Museum in Norway.

2007

Lucy Gibson W'05 is working for the Aspen Institute in Washington, D.C. in the Ascend Program, a policy program that takes a two-generation approach to move children and their parents toward educational success and economic security.

2009

Hollis McLoughlin '09 started a new job in New York City with the Brunswick Group, a strategic communications firm based in London with 24 offices worldwide. He lives in Tribeca with three friends from Trinity College and is the godfather to his nephew.

2010

Drew McInturff W'08 M'10 is in graduate school at Florida State University studying screenwriting.

2011

Ahmani Clark '11 graduated from Loyola University New Orleans in May 2019 with a degree in biological sciences and then enrolled in George Washington University's 15-month second-degree nursing program.

Will Gibson W'09 is a staff assistant for Senator Mike Braun of Indiana and continues to pursue his



Ahmani Clark '11



Shannon Morgan '11



Carson Peters '12

interests in environmental studies.

Upon graduating from New York University in 2019, **Shannon Morgan '11** entered Columbia University to pursue a joint JD/MBA and proceeded to intern with Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP in New York, New York.

2012

Carson Peters '12 graduated from Grinnell College with a bachelor of arts in

biology of global health. She will complete her master's of public health (MPH) program in epidemiology at University of Iowa in the spring. As Carson officially graduated in May (with a virtual graduation), she had finished her undergraduate coursework in December 2019. Last semester, she was interning at National Institutes of Health, in the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and working as an aftercare teacher at Grace Episcopal Day School in Kensington,

Maryland, where Jennifer Danish, mother of Sam W'10 M'12 and Sophie Danish W'12 M'14, is the Head of School. It was a wonderful St. Patrick's connection and an amazing opportunity for her to be involved. Over this past summer, she was taking courses for her MPH program, coordinating a service initiative in her community to share gratitude with essential workers, and working as a COVID-19 contact tracer.

2013

Lennon Lewis '13, a senior at Washington University in St. Louis, was in Dublin, Ireland for the 2020 spring semester.

2016

Laila Booker '16 wants to thank St. Patrick's for giving her the academic foundation that will help her excel at Yale University.

Jasper Chartener ex.

W'14 spent a spring term at the Island School in Eleuthera, Bahamas. This summer, he was part of an underwater archaeology team surveying shipwrecks from the Revolutionary era around the Dutch island of St. Eustatius in the Leeward Islands before heading into his senior year at Steamboat Mountain School in Colorado.

Joey Graham ex. W'14

graduated from Landon in 2020. He is taking a gap year where he is coaching lacrosse and will attend IMG Academy in the spring. Next fall, he will be a freshman at Harvard University where he plans to play lacrosse.

Alexander Kaye '16 loved his time at Millbrook School, where he had a blast playing tennis and squash until graduating in the spring. Alexander headed to Colby College this year where he has reconnected with **Sonia Griffen W'13** and looks



Laila Booker '16

forward to seeing **Carter McGloon ex. W'14.**

Nolan Musslewhite ex. W'14 graduated from St. Albans this past summer and is currently on a gap year studying classics at the Accademia Vivarium Novum in Rome. The program is conducted entirely in Latin and Ancient Greek - speaking included! He will be attending Princeton University next fall, as a member of the class of 2025.

Liam Warin W'14 finished his senior year at St. Albans and is attending the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University.

2017

Alumni **Olivia Carnot '17**, **Charlotte Khuzami '17**, **Katherine Moe '17**, **Tia Piziali '17**, and **Laila White '17** were all nominated by their peers to be the Student of the Year for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society in their respective schools.

For nominee **Tia Piziali '17**, a senior at Georgetown Day, fighting for this cause is personal. "Many of you know that my family and I have been fighting hard to cure my rare disease, PKU. However, I have decided to expand my advocacy and focus on a disease that I have not personally suffered from. I am fundraising in honor of my good friend and leukemia-survivor Jordan Cushner and in memory of my cousin Tommy, whose life was taken by blood cancer."

Charlotte Khuzami '17, also a senior at Georgetown Day, expressed that she is "both honored and excited to become part of the journey towards a cure for blood cancers."

Laila White '17 and her team of five members, including **Katherine Moe '17** and **Olivia Carnot '17**, all now seniors at Madeira, had a goal of raising \$100,000 for the campaign. Laila was honored to lead this amazing team of young women "because I am able to demonstrate that the youth can make change happen and that there are bigger problems than ourselves."

2019

Charlie Kaye '19 loves his time at Millbrook School where he is learning on campus. Charlie is working hard academically while having fun playing soccer, ice hockey, and golf.



Nolan Musslewhite ex. W'14, Will Holland W'14, and Will Nash ex. W'14 at their graduation from St. Albans



Will Nash ex. W'14, Will Holland W'14, and Liam Warin W'14 at their graduation from St. Albans



As we face the persistent uncertainties of this challenging time, the St. Patrick's community continues to shine. Your generosity and support enable the Day School to adapt quickly to our changing circumstances, all while maintaining our exceptional educational program. We are stronger together. Together . . . We Shine.

Thank you, we are truly grateful!

2020–2021 ANNUAL FUND

Give online at www.stpatsdc.org/donate

Have questions or need more information?

Please contact Dana Saab, Director of the Annual Fund,
at 202-342-7010 or SaabD@stpatsdc.org.





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www.stpatsdc.org

OUR NEW WEBSITE LAUNCHES THIS SPRING!

Be sure to check it out. Same
domain, www.stpatsdc.org,
whole new look.

Follow us on **SOCIAL MEDIA**
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news and catch a glimpse of
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Instagram: [@stpatswolfhounds](https://www.instagram.com/stpatswolfhounds)
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NEW THIS YEAR, THE ST. PATRICK'S ALUMNI NEWSLETTER!

Please reach out to Chris Bolger
at BolgerC@stpatsdc.org if you
have not received your copy.

Our Mission

St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School
strives to create a diverse and
inclusive learning community of
students, faculty and staff, and
parents who recognize the infinite
value of every individual as a child
of God. We are committed to
developing character, advancing
human understanding, and
promoting academic excellence to
shape engaged citizens who live with
integrity, empathy, and purpose.

Maggie Cohen '30 and Andrew
White '30 show off vegetables
grown at our new Garden &
Outdoor Learning Space.

