

St. Mark's School seeks to reflect the increasingly diverse world in which our students presently live and will live in the future. We intend to provide our students with a superior education in a community of students, parents, faculty, and staff that represents a variety of racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds.

We believe in offering everyone in our community the opportunity to develop the perspective-taking skills to lead lives of consequence within and beyond our community. We believe in offering a transformative educational experience focused on learning how to understand our own identities and to see our identities from other people's points of view.

This approach is anchored in our identity as an Episcopal school. Therefore, we emphasize the importance of spiritual reflection and the intentional teaching of wisdom, compassion, empathy, and humility. This identity guides our ongoing work to become a truly antiracist school, one where every member of our community feels fully welcomed and accepted in all aspects of their identity.

In 2020-2021, St. Mark's:

- ✓ **Developed the Antiracist Strategic Planning Task Force** for the St. Mark's School community to form a shared understanding of social justice identity development language to use to meet adults and students where they are, inside and outside of the classroom.
- ✓ **Firmly established the role of the director of community and equity affairs** within all of the critical internal areas of school life and the external operations of the school (from academics, hiring and training of faculty and staff, faculty and staff professional development, and athletics to admissions, advancement, alumni, and antiracism education for the Board of Trustees), keeping in mind that St. Mark's School is embracing social justice identity development and antiracist principles and practices to enhance their commitment to the whole student and the school community.
- ✓ **Created a Board of Trustees Antiracism: Community and Equity Committee** to oversee the School's progress in its advance to doing the ongoing work of becoming an antiracist school community. Established a liaison from the Board of Trustees to support work with the head of school and the Board of Trustees on advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice literacy, training and principles throughout the school community. Worked with select members of African American board members and the Advancement Office to establish a partnership role for the Black alumni group.
- ✓ **Provided antiracism training** for House faculty and faculty involved in student discipline.
- ✓ **Enhanced professional development opportunities** for faculty and staff, building on a foundation of previous offerings focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- ✓ **Completed the implementation of a confidential process for reporting** on and vigorously addressing incidents of racial bias, conscious and unconscious bias, that occur on campus.
- ✓ **Expanded counseling services to include additional resources for Black, Brown and Asian students;** hired a part-time Black health and wellness educator with expertise in supporting Black and students of color experiences with racial trauma. This position will be full-time beginning in 2021-2022.
- ✓ **Identified antiracist handbook updates** to support antiracist principles.
- ✓ **Completed more intentional antiracist curriculum work,** such as developing a IV Form English course focusing on social justice identity development, and an environmental science course unit on vulnerability of Black and Brown Americans to COVID-19 due to urban inequity.
- ✓ **Supported a robust Pathways program,** led by Assistant Director of Admission and Associate Director of Community and Equity Starry Zhu.
- ✓ **Held student and faculty forums and professional development opportunities** focused on the Stop Asian Hate movement.

PATHWAYS PROGRAM

Pathways Program Promotes Awareness

St. Mark's Pathways program promotes awareness around cultural difference and provides affinity opportunities for students whose social or identity needs may not be reflected in the dominant culture at St. Mark's. In addition to four Pathways prefects, who lead affinity groups and serve as the student voice for Community and Equity, each group has its own student leaders who organize meetings and activities throughout the year. The 2020-2021

Pathways affinity groups were:

- Asian Student Alliance (ASA)
- Black Lives Union (BLU)
- Brilliant
- Christian Fellowship Group (CFG)
- Eastern Religion Fellowship (ERF)
- Gender & Sexuality Alliance (GSA)
- International Student Connection (ISC)
- J-Team
- Los Leones
- Men Are Not Born; They Are Made
- Native American Alliance
- #Openlysecular
- Southborough Society
- Students with Interracial Lives (SWIRL)
- White Students Against Racism (WSAR)



TOTAL MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVITY OF THE GROUPS IN 2020-2021:

363 MEMBERS

410 ALLIES

70+ MEETING & EVENTS

Community & Equity DAY

C&E DAY:

A Meaningful Learning Experience

On Wednesday, February 24, St. Mark's held its annual Community and Equity (C&E) Day, this year through a completely virtual format. The entire student, faculty, and staff community took part in a full day of interactive workshops and presentations.

The day kicked off with a keynote speech by Michael B. Moore '80, a member of the St. Mark's Board of Trustees, chair of the St. Mark's Antiracism Trustee Committee, and the first diversity and inclusion officer at cloud software company Blackbaud. Moore discussed his experiences as a student at St. Mark's and the path that led him back to a leadership position at the School as an adult. Following Moore's speech, Director of Community and Equity Affairs John Daves presented on "Unpacking Whiteness After the Insurrection and the Inauguration."



MICHAEL B. MOORE '80

A series of student-led workshops followed, including:

- “White Feminism: Racism in the Women’s Rights Movement,”
- “Pronouns and Gender Identity,”
- “All Blue/Black Lives Matter,”
- “Does Social Media Help or Harm Social Movements?,”
- “Tracing the Roots of Colorism,”
- “Introducing Body Positivity and Defining Basic Feminist Terms,”
- “A Privilege ‘Walk’,”
- “Asian American History: Who is American?,”
- “How Does the COVID-19 Pandemic Intersect with Race in the United States?,”
- “Who are ‘We?’ Where are ‘We’ Now?,”
- “Navigating Blackness vs. Whiteness,”
- “How Should Christians and the Church Take Action Against Injustice and Racism?,” and
- “International Students’ Identity.”

After the Umoja Celebration of Identity rounded out the morning’s activities, faculty members led afternoon workshops for the St. Mark’s adult community on topics including social justice, racial identity, Episcopal identity and DEI work, Disney’s *Moana* through the lens of global citizenship, the American Reconstruction and the American Civil Rights Movement, and social identity through the lens of literature.

Two films—*A Most Beautiful Thing* and *I Am Not Your Negro*—were available for students to view in the Center during the adult workshops.

“Despite all the challenges we’ve faced this year, I’m so proud of the team, especially the Pathways leaders, for making the C&E Day a positive, meaningful, and student-centered learning experience,” said Associate Director of Community and Equity Affairs Starry Zhu. “Not only did they offer 13 interactive workshops with fascinating topics, but they also brought us so much joy and happiness by celebrating their identities in creative and artistic ways on Zoom. They just never fail to amaze me!”



“Our first session held more than 75 people, and we had a great time engaging in a group discussion with our peers and teachers, and heard a variety of opinions,” said Vianey Morris ’21, who led the “All Blue/Black Lives Matter” session with Bannon Jones ’21. “We hope that the attendees left with an understanding on how countermovements can be harmful to other movements.”

“Having the opportunity to help lead a session on body positivity was so incredibly rewarding,” added VI Former Tate Frederick. “Hearing from so many different people with different perspectives further inspires me to drive forward the celebration of female identity on our campus.”

To watch C&E Day presentations by Michael B. Moore ’80 and Dr. John Daves, visit www.stmarksschool.org/equity.

ALUMNI LISTENING SESSIONS

Alumni Listening Sessions Foster Partnership

In response to a call to action from BIPOC alumni, two listening sessions were held in 2021: One exclusively for alumni of color, and one that was open to alumni of all backgrounds. St. Mark's engaged DEI practitioner Monique Miles, a vice president and managing director at the Aspen Institute, to assist in creating sessions that were safe, positive, and effective.

The first session, a closed session for alumni of color, took place in January, with approximately 45 participants attending. The second session took place in February and was open to all alumni. Approximately 80 people attended.

Clear themes and calls to action emerged from the sessions, including:

- A call to define success, including establishing metrics (both quantitative and qualitative) to track outcomes related to DEI and antiracism efforts.
- A call for transparency and consistent communication with alumni to share progress and updates.
- A call for institutional responsibility and leadership in this work with an emphasis on professional development for adults and institutional leaders.
- A call for deeper engagement with alumni of color, including establishing an advisory council, speaker series, and roundtable chats to ensure there is a way for alumni with deep DEI and antiracism expertise to share their wisdom with the school and its many stakeholders.
- A call for a formal mentoring program between alumni and students.
- A call to build alumni community and foster connections across generations and a diverse range of lived experiences (with specific calls to design exclusive AoC events and to teach antiracism and identity development at alumni events that include white alumni).

45|80
participants
attended

Next steps include assessing and prioritizing suggestions, identifying a plan to engage our parent constituency as well as the School's Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander communities.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

One of the School's antiracism action steps, outlined by Head of School John Warren '74 in July 2020, is mandatory antiracist professional development programming for faculty and staff. In 2020-2021, faculty members took part in the following external professional development opportunities:

- People of Color Conference
- White Privilege Conference
- National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) diversity professional development
- Association of Independent Schools of New England (AISNE) social justice standards

In addition, professional development opportunities at St. Mark's for faculty and staff included:

- Community & Equity Day, with breakout sessions for faculty and staff
- White racial identity training for faculty
- Antiracist white identity training for staff
- Town hall meetings and listening sessions for faculty and staff
- Voluntary faculty and staff meeting to discuss January 6 events at the Capitol

To learn more about community and equity at St. Mark's, visit
www.stmarksschool.org/equity