



## 2 FEATURE



Tyler Jensen-Roman, '26, our runner up in the Spelling Bee

## 8 ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



St. Mark's alum, Michael Artlip, '16

## 14 STUDENT SNAPSHOTS



Max Cooper, '30, shows how to smile behind your mask

# From the Headmaster

GARHETT WAGERS



Garhett Wagers  
Headmaster



Ansel Fishman, '28, participating in the Hour of Code in honor of Computer Science Education Week

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The world is continuously changing, even when we don't notice. There are moments that seem to suddenly advance growth. Perhaps some are true leaps in a single point in time, but it's more likely we suddenly noticed, while the change has been slowly building all along. The past year of our life, thrusting schools into virtual and blended learning amidst a swirling storm of pandemic, social discord, and political divide has highlighted this point.

Since it is a school's job to prepare the child for the path, and clearly we can't see what lies very far down that path, what are we preparing them for? At St. Mark's, we believe we are preparing our graduates to be future leaders who will be ready to solve the unknown problems that may emerge. What do they need to do this? They need to think critically, collaborate with others, understand how to communicate (which includes both talking and listening), and to develop these capacities they need to practice them.

This year I started a new student group called The Headmaster's Council. Each middle school cohort elected one representative for this council. Monthly, I met with the reps from 5th and 6th grade separately from the reps of 7th and 8th grade. At our meetings, the representatives would share questions, ideas, or suggestions their cohort wanted me to know about. Topics included dress code, recess, lunch, midmorning break,

electives, and more. All are topics that speak to parts of their daily life at school. I listened to their ideas; sometimes they discussed them amongst the council members, and often they would take discussions back to their cohorts for further consideration.

Little by little, council members began to understand how an idea can change how they live. We modified the dress code in a way they fought for. We reorganized parts of the daily schedule based on observations students made about eating and breaks. These are small examples, but powerful at the same time, because it allowed our students to recognize the impact their voice can have on their environment. As our children grow, there are many ways we encourage them to use their voices. Over time, and with maturity, we guide them to refine this skill. We want their experience here to help them learn about the world (through math, science, literature, history, art, and more), and we want them to learn about themselves. A launch from middle school to high school is most successful when students know more about what is easy for them, what is hard, and how to get help. It can be transformative if they know how to use their voice to advocate for things that matter to them, both as learners at school, and as influencers, representatives, and leaders in life.

In January, I had my last meeting with our first group of Headmaster's

Council Reps, so we could elect new ones to broaden the opportunities for student leadership. I asked our outgoing fall/winter reps what they learned in this role, and their answers did not disappoint. Yes, they led and got things done to help their peers. They also got the point; here are a few of their answers. "People have different opinions." "It is a responsibility to use your voice to make change." "It's important to respect other peoples' ideas." "Good leaders listen, and try to use others' ideas."

As one council representative said to me, "this was more positive than I thought it would be, and had a real effect." I agree, and feel excited to see how our students will help me grow the impact of the Headmaster's Council and grow their school. It is clear to me that students at St. Mark's are working to live into our Portrait of a Graduate as "mindful, active learners who embrace the challenges of a robust educational experience, and are ethically and spiritually motivated to make a positive contribution to the community and the world."

Garhett Wagers  
Headmaster



Mrs. Baumgarten and the class of 2028 enjoying a snack and book in the courtyard