

Alumni Spotlight

ALUMNI IN THE ARTS



Blake Heatherington, '14; Below: Blake, in 8th Grade performing at St. Mark's in 2014

Met Blake Heatherington, who attended St. Mark's from 4th grade through 8th grade. While she was at St. Mark's, Blake showed a passion for theatre and musical performance, taking to the stage in numerous productions, including Pinnocchio in her 8th grade year. After graduating from St. Mark's in 2014, she attended Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts as a vocal major. Upon graduation, she attended New York University to study opera performance, film/TV production, and music business. Blake had the opportunity to study abroad in Prague. We caught up with Blake recently to hear more about life as a college student, her studies at NYU, and her favorite memories from St. Mark's.

MAKING OUR MARK: What is your favorite St. Mark's memory?

BLAKE: I was editor of the yearbook when I was in 8th grade, and I had a fantastic time! Funny enough (considering my PE in high school was online) I also remember our PE classes fondly, they are the reason I am not illiterate where sports are concerned.

MOM: Did you have a favorite class or teacher at St. Mark's?

BLAKE: My Spanish class with Sr. Basso is still one of my very favorite classes to this day. He always approached learning new material in an exciting and entertaining way.

MOM: Who influenced you most during your time at St. Mark's?

BLAKE: I would have to say Ms. Hernandez who taught the music classes. I always looked forward to going to class (not surprising, right?) Mr. Wagers also helped me in his Speech class and helped me realize my gift for public speaking.



MOM: How did St. Mark's prepare you for high school and college?

BLAKE: Academically I was incredibly well prepared. The study skills and high level of academics helped me exceed expectations at all my schools. I graduated from KHSPVA with high honors and artistic awards. I know my basis at St. Mark's helped me accomplish that.

MOM: What are you up to now?

BLAKE: After graduating from KHSPVA as a vocal performance major, I matriculated to NYU as a vocal performance major and TV/Film/Theatre production minor. I studied abroad in Prague, and interned at a well-known tv show casting agency that worked with Amazon Prime and Netflix. Upon returning, I decided to transfer to the New England Conservatory, one of the top 10 vocal performance schools in the country, to focus more on opera performance. Currently, I am singing the title role of Alcina in Handel's opera Alcina in Chicago with Chicago Summer Opera. The show premieres in July 2021.

MOM: Do you have any advice for current St. Mark's students who want to pursue the arts?

BLAKE: Find what makes you happy. Pursuing the arts can be just as exciting and fulfilling as playing sports. There is no reason to have to choose between the two. I encourage anyone interested in the arts to use the amazing community and resources that St. Mark's has to offer to their advantage. You should do what makes you happy. In my case, it was music!



Catherine Andrews, '16

Met Catherine Andrews, who attended St. Mark's from Pre-K through 8th grade. After graduating from St. Mark's in 2016, Catherine went to Episcopal High School, where she participated in technical theatre for all four years and worked on the school's literary magazine, Light and Shadow, for two years. Catherine was very involved in EHS Chorale. After graduating in 2020, Catherine moved to Iowa City, Iowa, to attend the University of Iowa. She is studying Creative Writing. We caught up with Catherine recently to hear more about life in college, her studies at the University of Iowa, and her favorite memories from St. Mark's.

MAKING OUR MARK: What is your favorite St. Mark's memory?

CATHERINE: Some of my favorite St. Mark's memories are of eating lunch in the courtyard with my friends, especially when the weather was particularly nice!

MOM: Did you have a favorite class or teacher at St. Mark's?

CATHERINE: My favorite class was Mr. Salley's science class. I still remember some of the experiments we did. I think one of the things that made Mr. Salley's class so special was that you could tell how much he loved science and wanted to share that love with his students.

MOM: Who influenced you most during your time at St. Mark's?

CATHERINE: There were many teachers at St. Mark's who had a strong impact on my life, Ms. Mayr especially so. She was my advisor for my 7th and 8th grade years, so I got to spend a lot of time with her. I learned a lot about how to interact with teachers and how to ask for help from her.

MOM: How did St. Mark's prepare you for high school and college?

CATHERINE: St. Mark's prepared me for Episcopal and the University of Iowa by helping me form good study habits and time management skills.

MOM: What are you studying now? Why did you choose that field of study?

CATHERINE: At the University of Iowa, I am studying Creative Writing and have plans to minor in Anthropology. I have loved writing for almost all of my life. Mr. Price, an English teacher who used to work at St. Mark's, helped me foster that love of storytelling, develop writing skills that I still rely on, and start me on my path as a writer. I didn't consider pursuing a career in writing until the end of my freshman year of high school when I had a realization that I had a talent for it and loved it more than any of my other hobbies or interests.

MOM: Do you have any advice for current St. Mark's students who want to pursue creative writing?

CATHERINE: The best advice I can give aspiring writers is to really dig your teeth into the craft. There's going to be many things about writing that you have to learn through experience. And, as with all art forms, writing takes a lot of practice!