

ST. PATRICK'S

Press



SPRING 2025
Wolfhound Watch
Robotics Club Dives Into Undersea Innovation
Grade 4 Curriculum: The Power of Jazz



A Garden of Generosity

ST. PATRICK'S MARKS 50 YEARS OF IDEALS

Under a canopy of twinkling lights and floral splendor, more than 300 members of the St. Patrick's community celebrated a milestone evening on March 1st. The Nave and Gymnasium & Performance Center were transformed into "An Enchanted Garden," a breathtaking backdrop for the 50th anniversary of the IDEALS Fund-A-Scholar event.

Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of our community, this year's event raised more than \$825,000, with an incredible \$435,000 dedicated to Fund-A-Scholar. These proceeds ensure that a St. Patrick's education remains within reach for a diverse range of families, reinforcing our mission to foster a vibrant and inclusive school community.

The event's magic was brought to life by the visionary leadership of Co-Chairs Elaine del Cerro and Julia Ghafouri. Their dedication, coupled with the tireless efforts of the IDEALS Task Force, parent volunteers, faculty and staff, the Board of Trustees' Advancement Committee, and the Parents Association, brought "An Enchanted Garden" to life and created an unforgettable experience.

The St. Patrick's community extends its deepest gratitude to everyone who contributed to the success of this landmark IDEALS celebration. Your generosity has planted seeds that will blossom for generations to come.

For those who were unable to attend but wish to contribute to the Fund-A-Scholar program, please contact Assistant Head of School for Institutional Advancement, Adelaide Barrett at barretta@stpatsdc.org.

Above: The St. Patrick's Gymnasium & Performance Center bloomed into a breathtaking enchanted garden!

Below: Co-Chairs Julia Ghafouri (P. '26, '33) and Elaine del Cerro (P. '25).



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SPRING 2025

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On the cover:

Basking in the sunlight streaming through the windows, Grade 3 students immerse themselves in stories and explore new worlds during their library time on the Whitehaven Campus.

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From the Head of School

A Year of Infinite Growth

As we wrap up another remarkable year at St. Patrick's, I find myself filled with pride and gratitude, not only for our milestones and traditions, but also for the boundless curiosity, compassion, and creativity our students bring to every corner of campus. They truly *shine infinitely brighter, grow infinitely stronger, and care infinitely more.*

I am inspired daily by the spirit of this community. Our students have led with heart and purpose, from thoughtful reflections shared in Chapel and Lower School gatherings to the inspiring efforts of our Middle School Chapel Council. Their voices rang out through academic competitions like the Spelling Bee, Recitation Contest, and Horizons GeoBee, and their dedication and sportsmanship shone across all our athletic seasons. Whether celebrating personal bests or team victories, our Wolfhound athletes modeled resilience and pride in every game and meet.

This spring's musical, *Newsies Jr.*, captured that same energy on stage, while student musicians brought audiences to their feet in performances filled with joy and talent. Our robotics club problem-solved their way through challenges with innovation and teamwork, while Lower School students expanded their understanding of music and culture through the Grade 4 jazz unit, both of which you can read about in the *Features* section of this magazine. Meanwhile, all students explored big ideas about art, activism, and identity in and out of the classroom, inspired by adults in our community like Librarian Jamila Felton and PK Teachers Elizabeth Gambal, Iesha Myhand, and Shuyi Peng, whose stories you will find in this issue.

Among the year's standout moments was welcoming Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser to campus this past fall. Her visit offered students a memorable opportunity to connect with civic leadership and reflect on the values of advocacy and service that are central to our mission of social justice and global citizenship.

We also celebrate the Class of 2025, whose outplacement journey has been extraordinary. Their achievements reflect their individual talents and determination and the strength of a PK3–Grade 8 education grounded in care, challenge, and connection.

Throughout these pages, you will discover snapshots of life at St. Patrick's, where students read closely, think deeply, lead courageously, and express themselves with clarity and confidence. And just for fun, don't miss our "Spot the Difference" game on page 20!

As always, our Episcopal identity remains the heartbeat of this school. In every space—classrooms, hallways, playing fields, and studios—our Wolfhound community lifts each other up with kindness, respect, and care. It is this spirit that makes St. Patrick's not just a school, but a home for growth in every sense of the word.

Go, Wolfhounds!

With warm regards,

Jalene Spain Thomas
Head of School



Around Campus



POPSICLE PARTY

In the middle of the summer, community members gathered for frozen treats and fellowship.

NEW PARENT DINNER

Head of School Jalene Spain Thomas hosted a dinner for new families representing over a hundred new students in August.

GREEN & WHITE NIGHT

September's 10th Annual Green & White Night was a fun and energetic evening where more than 200 community members gathered to enjoy each other's company and kick off our Annual Fund, chaired by John Barabino (P. '25).



GRANDPARENTS & SPECIAL FRIENDS VISITING DAY

In November, the Day School welcomed grandparents and special friends to campus to attend chapel, enjoy musical performances, classroom visits, engage in service projects, and stop by photo booths as part of this annual cherished tradition.

PARENT SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES WITH DAY SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Counselors Julianne Reilly and Debbie Weinberger supported parents and caregivers with programs such as Parenting Anxious Kids and Parenting with Positive Discipline, offering practical strategies for managing challenges and fostering resilience. Spring book clubs and a monthly support group for parents of neurodiverse students provided additional opportunities for connection and learning.

PARENTS AS READING PARTNERS MORNINGS

We were excited to welcome Lower School parents into our classrooms for Parents as Reading Partners Mornings. These short visits allowed parents to see our reading curriculum in action.



ST. FRANCIS DAY CHAPEL

In early October, we gathered at our St. Francis Day Chapel and welcomed Patty and Zara, two beautiful Irish Wolfhounds, courtesy of our friends Mary and John O'Malley!



EPIPHANY CHAPEL

During our Epiphany Chapel in January, we reflected on the season through readings, prayers, and music, with Grade 2 students Joseph G., Anjana G., and Lulu S. singing solos in “We Three Kings,” marking the end of the Christmas season and the beginning of a new year.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY CHAPEL

This year's St. Patrick's Day Chapel was especially meaningful as our youngest students in PK3 and PK4 joined the celebration for the very first time! Honoring tradition, the service featured the stirring sound of bagpipes, readings from the Middle School Chapel Council, a joyful rendition of the “Garden Song” sung by faculty and staff, and an inspiring homily delivered by Interim Chaplain The Rev. Sean Cavanaugh.



MAYOR BOWSER VISITS ST. PATRICK'S

In November, St. Patrick's welcomed Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser for an inspiring talk with Grades 3-8 students, sparking meaningful conversations about leadership, civic engagement, and the power of active participation.



CLOSEUP FOUNDATION: CONNECTING THROUGH CIVIL DISCOURSE

This fall, our Grades 5-8 faculty engaged in professional development with the CloseUp Foundation to foster civil discourse, while our Grade 7 and 8 students participated in an online deliberation about social media with peers from other schools, showcasing their leadership and critical-thinking skills.

44TH ANNUAL MICHAEL C. LEUTHE RECITATION CONTEST

Blair C. '28 won first place in the 44th Annual Michael C. Leuthe Recitation Contest with Queen Elizabeth I's “The Speech to the Troops at Tilbury,” while Lucy H. '25 and Frances Gray F. '27 tied for second, and Eli C. '25 placed third, as students in Grades 5-8 delivered powerful performances that celebrated literature and public speaking.





MIDDLE SCHOOL MATH TEAM

The St. Patrick's Math Team provided Middle School students with opportunities to engage in challenging mathematical problem-solving and represent the school in competitions, including the Independent School Math Association of Washington math meets and the D.C. MATHCOUNTS contest, as dedicated mathletes practiced weekly and demonstrated their commitment to intellectual pursuit.

ART STUDY IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD DIVISION

This year, the PK3B Bumblebees embarked on a layered, multimedia art experience inspired by contemporary artist Kehinde Wiley.



ST. PATRICK'S WINS HORIZONS GEO BEE

In the spring, Students in Grades 5 and 6 faced off against Maret and Norwood to capture the 2025 Horizons Geography Bee title, earning their third win in four years with the narrowest point margin in recent history!

CHRISTMAS PAGEANTS

The Christmas Pageants, rich in beauty, tradition, and spirit, welcomed the holiday season.

HOLIDAY CONCERT

St. Patrick's celebrated its annual Holiday Concert, showcasing the talents of our students and the dedication of music teachers Alicia Knox, Laura Petersen, and Betsy Sebring.

GRADE 5 MUSICAL PERFORMANCE: THE NATURE-VERSE

In March, Grade 5 showcased instrument playing, movement, choreography, singing voices, and expressive speaking inspired by the natural world and the art of Andy Goldsworthy.

GRADE 7 COFFEE HOUSE

In January, Grade 7 students showcased their talents at the inaugural Coffee House, performing under the direction of music teacher Alicia Knox and sharing original poetry inspired by their studies, as parents and faculty gathered in the Great Hall to celebrate their creativity, dedication, and growth as musicians, writers, and performers.



WOLFHOUND WATCH



St. Patrick's competes in the Capital Athletic Conference (CAC), a group of like-configured independent schools in the metropolitan area.

FALL SEASON

GIRLS VARSITY SOCCER

Coaches

Shelby Buford
Patrick Neilan

Record

6-5

CAC Tournament

4th Place

Season Highlight

4-2 win over Langley School

CAC All-Stars

Colbie P. '25
Wynne W. '25

BOYS VARSITY SOCCER

Coaches

Brodie Edgerton
Gordon Jones

Record

9-2



CAC Tournament

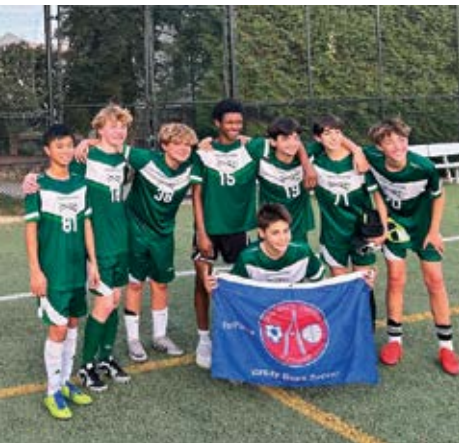
1st Place

Season Highlight

CAC Championship Game victory over Langley

CAC All-Stars

Campbell B. '25
Mateo D. '25
Christian M. '25
Eric W. '25



GIRLS GRADE 6 SOCCER

Coaches

Iesha Myhand
Liz Oduro

Record

8-2



CAC Tournament

1st Place

Season Highlight

CAC Championship Game victory over Langley

BOYS GRADE 6 SOCCER

Coaches

Cyrus Ghoreichi
Micah Levanos

Record

6-4

CAC Tournament

3rd Place

Season Highlight

6-0 win over the Lab School

JUNIOR VARSITY & VARSITY CROSS COUNTRY

Coaches

Allan Boyarski
Victoria Dugan
Julia Hiemstra

Season Highlight

The team's performance at the CAC Cross Country Championship—Harrison F. '25 took first overall in the Boys Varsity race and Lyla T. '27 took first place in the Girls Grade 6 race.



WINTER SEASON

BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL

Coach

Kenny Brewton

CAC Record

10-1



CAC Tournament

1st Place

Season Highlight

Defeating Sheridan to win the CAC Championship

CAC All-Stars

Duke A. '25
Campbell B. '25
Mateo D. '25
Christian M. '25
Mario T. '25



BOYS JUNIOR VARSITY BASKETBALL

Coaches

Kenny Brewton
Derek Owens

Record

6-4

CAC Tournament

4th Place

Season Highlight

Regular season win vs Green Acres

GIRLS VARSITY BASKETBALL

Coaches

Clifton Cottom
Michelle Cottom

Record

7-2

CAC Tournament

3rd place

Season Highlight

Defeating Congressional on a buzzer-beater basket

CAC All-Stars

Tasneem G. '25
Colbie P. '25
Ryan S. '25
Wynne W. '25

GIRLS JUNIOR VARSITY BASKETBALL

Coach

Shyrone Palms

Record

7-3

CAC Tournament

2nd place

Season Highlight

Championship game vs Langley



ATHLETIC SPOTLIGHT

Liz Oduro

After graduating from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2017 with a BS in Health, Physical Education, and Exercise Science, Liz began her teaching career in Richmond City Public Schools at Broad Rock Elementary. While teaching there, she also took on coaching responsibilities for basketball and softball at Collegiate School in Richmond. After several years of teaching and coaching in Richmond, Liz decided it was time to be closer to her family. She relocated to Northern Virginia to continue pursuing her teaching and coaching aspirations.

Q: What brought you to St. Patrick's?

Growing up in Northern Virginia, I spent every summer attending D.C.'s Jabbo Kenner Summer Basketball League at Georgetown University. I've always had a deep love for D.C., and the Georgetown area in particular. Teaching and living in D.C. has always

been a dream of mine, and I'm grateful to be making it a reality. I truly believe God guided my path to this opportunity.

I also had the chance to work with Mrs. [Jalene] Spain Thomas at my previous school, who left a lasting impression on me. I knew I wanted to follow her leadership wherever she went. I thought

to myself, wherever you are, I am. When I heard she was joining the St. Patrick's community, I checked for a PE position, but there wasn't one, until something told me to look again a month later. Sure enough, a position had been posted. I applied through the administration at the time before Jalene joined the community, wanting to earn it on my own. After

accepting the offer, I finally shared the news, and her reaction was unforgettable.

Q: What grades and sports do you coach at the Day School, and what values do you aim to instill in your students?

I serve as the lead Physical Education Teacher for Kindergarten and Grade 1, while also assisting with Grades 2, 3, 5 and 6. In addition to teaching, I coach Girls Junior Varsity Soccer and Girls Varsity Girls Lacrosse.

I strive to instill self-confidence in my students and players because it extends far beyond athletics and into all aspects of life. When they feel nervous, I remind them to repeat, *“I can and I will.”* I also emphasize resilience, teaching them that no one gets something perfect on the first try. In sports, and in life, mistakes happen, but dwelling on them only holds us back. Just like an athlete must move on quickly to the next play, we must learn from our mistakes, shake them off, and keep going. Ultimately, I hope to instill self-confidence, resilience, and the ability to move forward with a positive mindset.

Q. This past fall, the Girls Junior Varsity Soccer team, led by you and PK4 Lead Teacher Iesha Myhand, captured the CAC Championship title. Can you share what it took to achieve this exciting victory?

Absolutely! I always felt that there was something special about this group, because I believe that if a team truly likes and supports each other, it shows on the field. We had players at varying skill levels, and Iesha and I focused on putting them in the best positions to succeed as a team. We told the girls, *“You may be a striker on your club team, but here, we might need you as a defender.”* As coaches, it was crucial to get everyone to buy into the team’s overall goal rather than focusing on individual roles. Their willingness to



trust the process and put the team first made all the difference.

I don’t even remember our season record because, as I told the girls, once the playoffs began, the record didn’t matter. When we made it to the championship game and found ourselves down in penalty kicks, our goalie, Sydney F. ’27, stepped up in a way I can’t say was coincidental. The week before, I had a moment in PE class

where I pulled her aside and told her, *“Syd, I believe in you. Do you believe in yourself?”* She said, *“Yes,”* and I told her, *“I know you can do anything you set your mind to.”*

Fast forward a week, and there she was, standing in goal during PKs, clearly very nervous. I reminded her of that conversation we had—*“I believe in you. You can do anything. You can and you will.”* I told her to take it one PK at a time

and repeat to herself, “*I can and I will.*” She blocked two shots, and on the last kick, with us up by one, we needed them to miss—or for her to block it. And then, it happened: the opposing player hit the crossbar.

I remember running to Sydney, picking her up, and telling her, “*I told you, you can do anything.*” The team came together in that moment, and it was one of my favorite coaching memories. The girls truly believed in the goal we set from the beginning of the season: to bring home the championship.

Q: What is your favorite part of teaching/coaching?

My favorite part of teaching and coaching is seeing a student or player finally get it, that “aha” moment. When they have that moment of confidence or excitement, or when they repeat something you’ve been telling them all season, it’s like, “*Wow, they really listened. They understand.*” Whether it’s a small accomplishment, like learning to skip correctly, or a big win, like a championship, it’s those victories that mean so much.

I entered education because of my passion for students, and I had an amazing PE teacher, Mr. Brown, who inspired my love for sports. Ultimately, I hope I’m creating lasting memories for my students, just like my teachers did for me, memories I still carry with me today.

Q: What lesson did you learn as an athlete that impacts the way you teach/coach now?

Never give up. It may sound cliché, but it’s true. My journey is unique. I started working toward my undergraduate degree in my mid twenties and didn’t graduate until my late thirties. Along the way, I sometimes felt behind, but the point is, you’ll always end up where you’re meant to be. Everything happens for a reason.

Resilience has been key for me. There were plenty of times when people

questioned my path, but I’ve always had a passion for working with kids, which started when I was 10 and began babysitting. The lesson is to believe in yourself and keep pushing forward, no matter how tough things get. There’s always light at the end of the tunnel after crossing hurdles you once thought were impossible.

I used to not feel confident in sharing my story, but now I realize it could help someone in their 20s or 30s who thinks it’s too late to change careers or go back to school. If God placed something in your heart, it’s there for a reason. Believe in yourself, take that step, and explore the possibilities.

Q: Who has made the biggest impact in your teaching career?

The person who made the biggest impact on my teaching career was Dr. Deborah Getty, a professor at Virginia Commonwealth University (Go Rams!). She was unlike any professor I’d ever met, and truly believed in me. She saw me the way I couldn’t see myself. There were so many times I went into her office crying, thinking I couldn’t do it, and she always had the right words to motivate me and help me believe in myself again.

She even surprised me at my graduation, even though she had retired, and I’ll never forget that moment. An energetic 5’3” educator from upstate New York, Dr. Getty played a pivotal role in my education and life. She continued to check in on me even after I graduated, and I’m forever grateful for her guidance. She’s been the most impactful person in my teaching journey.

Q: How has your upbringing influenced your career?

My superhero has always been my mom, Dora. I still don’t know how she did it all. Growing up in Ghana, she was one of 10 children and the only girl to go to college. She was also a teacher, as was my grandfather, so I guess it runs in the family.

When we came to the States, my mom was the one who introduced us to sports like T-ball and basketball, making sure we stayed active. She made countless sacrifices for us and always put her children first. My mom always believed in me, even when I didn’t believe in myself. She didn’t let me settle for mediocrity, always expecting more and reminding me of my potential. Growing up, I couldn’t understand her strictness, but now I do. She was shaping me to be the best version of myself.

As an adult, she’s my best friend. Our relationship has evolved, especially with the cultural differences, but we’ve built a deeper understanding. Even during a recent trip to Ghana to lay her mother to rest, I realized how much of her strength and character was passed down to my mom, and now to me. I was even named after her mother, and in our culture, that makes me her grandchild twice over.

I hope to be half the person my mom is and that others view me the way they view her. She’s truly an amazing human being, and I’m forever grateful for her.

Q: Do you have any favorite mottos?

I first heard this quote from former Day School Early Childhood Division teacher, Taylor Heasley, who I coach softball with. She introduced it to me a few years ago, and I’ve put my own twist on it. It goes, “*She who has the will to win can never be defeated.*” To me, this means that if you put in the work, through preparation, nutrition, and rest, then win, lose, or draw, you know you gave it your all. And that’s what matters most. You can only learn from it and improve next time. With the will to win, nothing can defeat you, because you know you did your best. As athletes, we’ve all had those moments where we knew we hadn’t prepared fully, and that’s when you feel defeated. But if you give your best effort and prepare, there’s nothing that can stop you except yourself. 🍀

“If you give your best effort and prepare,
there’s nothing that can stop you
except yourself.”



Infimite Value





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.



Leading by Example

Voices from the 2024-2025 Chapel Council



The Middle School Chapel Council is one of our student leadership groups. Made up of Grade 8 students, they help to lead worship on both campuses by reading in chapels, leading prayers, and serving as acolytes. Guided by the chaplain and music department, these students regularly provide leadership of school worship services and serve as mentors and models for our younger students. Some of these students lend their musical talents to our worship as well. Chapel Council helps to set the tone for all student participation, and these student leaders create a safe and welcoming environment for all.

MEMBERS OF THE 2024-2025 CHAPEL COUNCIL WERE INVITED TO REFLECT ON THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

What motivated you to join Chapel Council?

“I was motivated to join Chapel Council to become more involved with my school.” (Anthony M. '25)

“I was motivated to join Chapel Council because it was an opportunity for me to serve my community.” (Duke A. '25)

“It gave me an opportunity to speak in front of a lot of people.” (Joshua F. '25)

What have you gained from the experience of being part of Chapel Council?

“I have learned about leading by example and why that is important.” (Alexa P. '25)

“From Chapel Council, I have learned how to be a model for other students, especially during Kindergarten–Grade 8 Chapels. I have learned that listening to the homilies and being respectful has made me a leader, setting the example for other students.” (Clara M. '25)



“I have learned about leading by example and why that is important.”

– Alexa P. '25

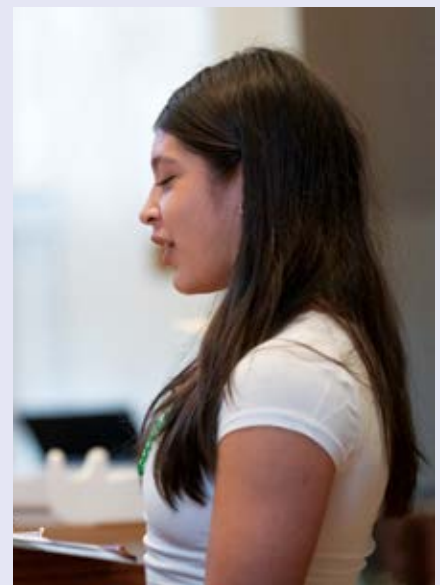


“By being a part of Chapel Council, I’ve continued to work on building confidence and resilience. Going up in front of the entire school is no simple task and can become very frightening, however through Chapel Council, I’ve become more comfortable with speaking in front of large numbers of people. Moreover, I’ve learned resilience through being a member of the Council. There are always times when I’ll mess up a word or a phrase, but when you’re speaking in front of an entire group of people, you can’t just shut down and stop talking, so you’re almost forced to keep pushing through.” (Duke A. '25)



“I have gained confidence, and it has helped me overcome my fear of public speaking.” (Fifi M-R. '25)

“I have learned how to show by example and teach others how to act in a sacred space.” (Tasneem G. '25)





From Scrap to Sheet

PK4B's Hands-On Papermaking Project

Our thoughtfully designed PK curriculum touches on many important developmental domains, and inspires joy and engagement. PK4B's recent papermaking project represents our faculty's expertise in interdisciplinary planning. This unit not only introduced the concepts of sustainability and conservation in a tangible way, but also gave students the opportunity to take on the role of active recyclers, creating something new and beautiful from something used and discarded.



The idea stemmed from Associate Teacher Una Winn, who brought it back to the classroom after attending a workshop focused on early childhood education. Previously, students understood recycling as simply sorting materials into bins. This project invited them into the process more deeply, showing them that they could take used paper from home and transform it into something entirely new.

To introduce the topic, the class read *The Great Paper Caper* by Oliver Jeffers, a whimsical story about a bear who chops down trees to make paper airplanes, until he and his forest friends realize they can repurpose old paper instead. The story resonated deeply with the class, inspiring them to collect paper scraps from home and school to use in their own creative recycling journey.

The process was hands-on and joyful. Students tore and cut paper into small pieces, then soaked them in a sensory table filled with water. As the materials softened and became pulp, children explored new vocabulary, words like *absorb*, *dissolve*, *evaporate*, and



damp, through touch, discussion, and observation. With great care, they spread the pulp onto mesh screens and left it to dry. Once dry, their excitement was palpable: they had made real, usable paper, just like the kind they see in classrooms and at home.

The project encouraged collaboration, developed fine motor skills, and offered a meaningful introduction to environmental responsibility. Students used their handmade paper in classroom

art projects and proudly brought sheets home to share with their families.

Bravo to teachers Lisa Merotto and Una Winn for guiding their students through this enriching and memorable learning experience—one that beautifully combined creativity, science, environmental stewardship, and the pure delight of making something by hand.



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE GAME

HEAD OF SCHOOL'S OFFICE EDITION

Compare the two pictures of Mrs. Spain Thomas' office. Circle the things in the first picture that are missing from the second. Answer key may be found on the back cover!





In Perfect Harmony

Passion, Pedagogy, and the Power of Jazz at St. Patrick's

At St. Patrick's, learning extends beyond the classroom walls and draws deeply from the talents and passions of our exceptional faculty and staff. This article features insights from two educators at the Day School—Physical Education Teacher Gordon Jones, a professional musician, and Grade 4 Homeroom Teacher Sam Hart—who collaborate annually on the Grade 4 Black History Month Jazz Unit. Their partnership offers a powerful example of how St. Patrick's nurtures a dynamic community grounded in interdisciplinary collaboration—one where educators are empowered to share their unique gifts and inspire students through real-world connections.

In this interview, Grade 4 Homeroom Teacher and Baseball Coach Sam Hart shares the origins of the Grade 4 Black History Month Jazz Unit, its key components, and his favorite jazz and blues artists to listen to and teach about.

What inspired you to create the Grade 4 Jazz Unit?

A few years ago, Erica Thompson, our Assistant Head of School for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, and Jamila Felton, one of our school librarians, sent out a challenge during Black History Month, to go beyond surface-level engagement and find meaningful ways to promote Black excellence. One of the first things that came to mind for me was jazz, an influential American export with deep roots and a rich history that has shaped countless other music genres. I drew on what I had learned in a history of jazz course I took in college to structure the curriculum. My goal was to approach it through a historical lens, exploring the early eras of jazz while also emphasizing that jazz isn't just a thing of the past, it's still alive and evolving today. I wanted students to see jazz as something vibrant, current, and relevant to their lives.

Can you walk us through the different parts of the unit and how they've evolved?

It started out as a pretty small project—just my section, 4B, listening to jazz musicians and learning about their



Sam Hart reads students a book about musician Trombone Shorty, then plays an excerpt of his song “Backatown.”

work. Since then, we've expanded the lesson to include the entire Grade 4 class. Each morning throughout the month of February, we begin by learning about a jazz musician, or sometimes two, especially if they share a similar style or era. Because many jazz songs can run 10 to 15 minutes long, we usually listen to excerpts to give students a taste of the styles and key concepts. I encourage them to listen for elements from earlier artists and to recognize how jazz influences other genres they might be familiar with.

I also wanted to incorporate an interactive component into the lesson. Laura Petersen, our Music Teacher, introduced me to Chrome Music Lab,

a user-friendly digital tool that lets students create their own music. With Laura's help, we built a basic jazz beat that students can layer with different instruments to experiment and create their own unique sound.

We've now integrated the jazz unit with 4A Homeroom Teacher Thérèse Khan's “My Life is My Art” unit, which explores how artists draw inspiration from the world around them. We connected that idea to jazz—for example, listening to Duke Ellington's “Take the ‘A’ Train” and identifying the rhythm of the train heading uptown to Harlem embedded in the background. This year, for the first time, we also used the Design Lab as part of the art component, where students

Lower School Spotlight

created artwork inspired by the world around them, tying it all back to the themes we explored in jazz.

The lesson culminates with a visit from PE Teacher Gordon Jones, who shares his professional jazz experiences with the students. They get to hear from someone with deep knowledge of music and jazz. Gordon explains music theory, the connection between jazz and the blues, and speaks powerfully about how jazz represents freedom. His visits are always a highlight of my year. He's engaging, incredibly knowledgeable, and extremely talented.

Is there a jazz artist you especially love teaching about and listening to?

Picking a favorite is definitely difficult! We always begin with Louis Armstrong—the king of jazz—who many students have already heard of, which helps build an immediate connection and sense of buy-in. I love introducing them to Trombone Shorty as well; he's a modern artist with the same New Orleans roots as Armstrong, which makes the historical through-line really compelling.

Another favorite is Sister Rosetta Tharpe, whom I actually learned about from Gordon. Many early female jazz artists were primarily singers and weren't given the same opportunities to play instruments, but Tharpe broke barriers in the 1940s as a gospel singer who also played electric guitar. In her music, you can hear an incredible blend of gospel, rock and roll, blues, and jazz. She really pushed the envelope.

I also enjoy exploring modern and local artists with the students. Esperanza Spalding, for instance, is from Baltimore and has collaborated with artists like Janelle Monáe. Her work shows how jazz intersects with R&B and continues to influence contemporary music.

And finally, Aaron Myers' *The Pride Album* is incredibly powerful—every song resonates in a meaningful way. It's a great example of how jazz continues to speak to the present moment.

In this interview, Physical Education Teacher Gordon Jones shares how jazz shaped his worldview, influences his teaching, and inspires his work with students today. At the Day School, he's known simply as Mr. Jones and Coach Jones, but around the world, he's recognized as Gordon "Saxman" Jones.

What sparked your interest in jazz, and how did you first get involved in the jazz scene?

What first sparked my interest in jazz was playing saxophone in my middle school band. As I progressed in 7th grade, I was introduced to the stage band and to jazz specifically. One of my instructors told me that musicians who play jazz can play any type of music, anywhere in the world, at any time. That idea really stuck with me. Around the same time, I became inspired by Clarence Clemons, the saxophonist for Bruce Springsteen. It was then that I realized you could make a career out of being a musician.

What does jazz mean to you?

To me, jazz and blues reflect the growth of a nation and its communities, and how that growth is expressed through music. I believe they are the greatest exports of the United States. The blues, in particular, represent freedom, and experiencing that sense of freedom is what ultimately drew me to jazz.

Do you still actively play music?

Yes, I still actively play music, especially horn-driven styles. I'm a member of the local band Black Masala and have recently performed with Soulroots. Music has taken me around the world, to places like Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, Finland, Germany, Peru, Rwanda, and South Africa. It's given me the chance to connect with people without words, which I see as a powerful expression of our shared humanity. Traveling and performing have shown me that music truly is a universal language.

In what ways does your musical background influence your teaching?

That's a great question. My musical background has taught me patience, focus, and the value of collaboration, all of which I bring into my teaching. Being in a band showed me how important it is to work as a team and to find joy in what you've worked hard to achieve.

I also draw directly from music when it comes to pacing and classroom dynamics. In music, we pay attention to six key elements related to tempo and expression: start together, stop together, faster, slower, louder, and softer. I use these same principles in the classroom. If students are struggling with a concept, we "stop together" and slow things



Physical Education Teacher and professional musician Gordon "Saxman" Jones with his saxophone in the Gymnasium & Performance Center.

down. If the group is feeling confident, we “start together” and increase the pace. It’s a flexible, responsive approach that helps keep learning in sync with the group’s needs.

What has your experience been working with Grade 4 students during their February Jazz Unit?

Three years ago, Mr. Hart invited me to present to the Grade 4 students during their Jazz Unit, and I was nervous at first. I’d never explained blues or jazz to such a young audience. But I knew kids can sense when you’re being authentic, so I focused on being real and sharing my genuine love for the music. I usually bring three types of saxophones—alto, baritone, and tenor—which sparks a ton of curiosity and questions. The students are excited to learn, especially about the instruments and their inventors. I am always moved by how engaged they were. Blues and jazz, though relatively new genres, carry their own struggles and emotions, something Grade 4 students can relate to in their own way.

Who are some of the most interesting musicians you’ve had the opportunity to play with?

When people ask what drew me to music, I always say it’s the joy of playing with others. For over a decade, I’ve toured with blues musician and MacArthur Grant recipient Corey Harris, who’s been a wonderful influence. I’ve also had the chance to work with members of the R&B band Lettuce, guitarist Buddy Guy, and renowned harmonica player Phil Wiggins. While harmonica and saxophone players don’t always mix, since the harmonica is often called the “Mississippi saxophone,” they can complement each other beautifully in the right R&B setting. 🎷



Students create unique jazz beats and artwork inspired by the world around them in the Design Lab as part of the Grade 4 Black History Month Jazz Unit.



Here’s what current and former Grade 4 students have to say about their experience with the Jazz Unit, sharing their thoughts and what made the lessons memorable.

Aubrey B. '28 - “I especially liked learning about people from different backgrounds.”

Dani E. '29 - “I liked learning about more than just traditional jazz. It feels like when you hear the word ‘jazz’ you think of a certain sound, so it was nice to hear other types within the same genre. We also got to learn about more modern artists, such as Aaron Myers and Esperanza Spalding.”

Davi R. '29 - “I liked learning more about artists who I had heard of but didn’t know very much about, like Ella Fitzgerald.”

Deji O. '29 - “I liked learning about all the iconic people playing the instruments. I especially enjoyed learning about Trombone Shorty!”

Eliana M. '29 - “I liked when Mr. Hart taught us where artists got inspiration from and why they played the songs they played.”

Hank S. '28 - “I liked learning about all the different types of jazz there are. My favorite artist was Thelonious Monk. I really like the way he plays the piano.”

Harrison A. '29 - “I really liked how Mr. Hart taught us about artists who we didn’t know. There are people who I had never heard of whose music I now listen to every day. It’s also really cool that there is a person at our school who has played with and knows so many famous jazz artists.”

Rory S. '29 - “I am a dancer, so I enjoyed learning about the kinds of dances that go along with jazz music. It gave me inspiration for when I am dancing on my own! I really enjoyed learning about Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong.”



MacArthur Campus Spotlight

Robotics Club Dives Into Undersea Innovation

The Robotics Club at St. Patrick's was founded in the fall of 2019 by Middle School Math Teacher and Math Specialist Dr. Beth Cole and has been a vibrant and innovative part of our school community ever since. That same year, the team made its debut in the FIRST LEGO League competition, and this past November, they proudly returned to the competitive arena after a multi-year hiatus.

Even in years without formal competition, club members have remained deeply engaged, building and programming LEGO-based robots using official FIRST LEGO League challenges to hone their engineering and problem-solving skills.

During competition seasons, the club takes on an even greater challenge: tackling real-world issues tied to the theme, consulting with experts, and designing creative, research-based solutions. This year's theme centered on enhancing undersea exploration and research. Rising to the occasion, the St. Patrick's team proposed a forward-thinking system of rechargeable, autonomous sea drones that collect oceanic data. Their design included solar- and wave-powered buoys that act as docking stations to recharge the drones, an innovative approach to supporting sustainable ocean research.



During competition seasons, the club takes on an even greater challenge: tackling real-world issues tied to the theme, consulting with experts, and designing creative, research-based solutions.

Eli F. '27 answered the following questions about participating in the Robotics Club:

Q: What did you enjoy most about participating in the Robotics Club this year?

“In my opinion, the best part of [participating in] Robotics Club was going to the robotics competition. We only had a little time to design and test our robot, so we had to finish doing some of the coding and making attachments on the fly at the competition.”

Q: What did you learn from being part of this club?

“I learned that even though robotics requires devotion and time, it pays off in the end and is fun.”

Q: What skills have you developed that you think you will use in the future?

“I developed teamwork skills when trying to collaborate with other robotics team members, and I hope those skills come in handy.”

Eli added “Dr. Cole always supported us as the leader of the robotics team and took time out of her weekend to work with us preparing for the competition. I would recommend robotics to almost anyone because of how fun it is.”

With creativity and determination driving their work, the Robotics Club continues to grow, and we can't wait to see what they accomplish next!





Librarian Jamila Felton with students
in the Day School Library.



Where Memory Travels
Books, Collage, and the Green Book

A talented artist whose work has garnered national and international recognition, Librarian Jamila Felton shares her creative journey, offering insights into the inspiration and process behind her work.

Your handmade books were recently featured in *Uppercase Magazine*, a Canadian journal celebrating craft and design. How did this opportunity come about, and what inspired the work?

Uppercase Magazine is a great international print magazine for artists of all mediums, and they always have open calls for work. I responded to a submission call focused on domestic arts, which resonated with me as I come from a long line of seamstresses—my mother’s great-grandmother was one, and she herself learned by working for a tailor and shadowing her aunt, a Boston seamstress. I don’t sew clothes, but I do sew books, which follows a similar process.

Years ago, I made two small handmade books exploring sewing and the generational traditions passed down through fabric and clothing, one of which includes an image of my mother seated at her sewing machine in 1971 with a big afro. Although I felt like it was a long shot, I submitted my work to *Uppercase*, and found out a couple months later that both images I sent would be featured in their upcoming domesticity issue.

Additionally, your mixed collage series, *We Can Go Wherever We Please*, was displayed in the Smithsonian’s Negro Motorist Green Book exhibition (Nov. 2024–Mar. 2025). What was your creative process in bringing the collages to life?

This year’s *Negro Motorist Green Book* exhibition at the Smithsonian included a local collaboration with the D.C. Public Library System. I was thrilled when a librarian from DCPL reached out to commission me to create four

collages for the show—my first-ever commissioned project. They were specifically looking for an artist whose work could be reproduced on notecards to sell throughout the exhibition.

I dove into researching the Green Book, spending time in libraries and combing through archived materials, including hundreds of photos from 1940s and ’50s Washington, D.C., providing a chance to lean into something I already loved doing as a librarian. The most challenging part was deciding what to include in each collage.

The collage-making process—cutting, composing, layering, designing—was incredibly rewarding. Though all four pieces focused on the same themes, travel, the Green Book, and African American life in the mid-20th century, I wanted each to feel distinct, especially since the notecards would be sold as a set. This project allowed me to push myself as an artist. It was fun artistically to play around with color and shape using only paper, scissors, and historic photos. The exhibition culminated in a special Black History Month celebration, where I led two sessions discussing my artistic process and guiding participants through a hands-on collage workshop. My goal was to show how accessible collage can be, and how powerful it is to create new work using historical materials.

I also had the chance to collaborate with Erica Thompson (Assistant Head of School for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) during our January Chapel honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Since we both had ties to the Green Book, we explored it as a powerful civil rights tool that represented dignity, mobility, and freedom through travel. 🌱



We Can Go Wherever We Please, one of four mixed-media collages Jamila created for the Smithsonian’s *Negro Motorist Green Book* exhibition.



The Warp The Weft The Waters, one of Jamila’s two handmade books featured in *Uppercase Magazine*.



Look, Listen, Interpret, Teach
A Reggio Emilia-Inspired Approach to
Supporting Individual and Group Learning

This year, Elizabeth Gambal '06 (Lead Teacher, PK3), Iesha Myhand (Lead Teacher, PK4), and Shuyi Peng (Associate Teacher, PK3) participated in Harvard University's Look, Listen, Interpret, and Teach (LLIT) Project Zero Course. Drawing on the collaborative research between Harvard's Project Zero and educators in Reggio Emilia, Italy, this course offered educators the opportunity to learn how to document student learning in ways that "make visible" what and how students learn, as well as how to use this data to reflect on and improve one's own teaching.

What motivated you to participate in the course?

Iesha: We were all familiar with the Reggio Emilia Approach, but we wanted to participate in official training to deepen our understanding and apply it more effectively in the classroom. While we regularly document classroom activities by capturing photos and uploading them with captions to Seesaw, a learning experience platform used in all PK classes for documentation, we embarked on this course to enhance our documentation practices.

Our goal was to explore the best ways to engage parents, involve teachers more meaningfully, and, most importantly, empower students to take an active role in their own documentation process. We wanted to be more intentional in how we capture and reflect on learning experiences, ensuring that documentation becomes a powerful tool for engagement and growth.

What is your take on the Reggio Emilia Approach?

Elizabeth: To me, the Reggio Emilia Approach is a philosophy of learning that views children not as empty vessels to be filled, but as individuals already brimming with ideas, curiosity, and creativity. As teachers, we serve as their partners, guiding and nurturing their natural interests while helping to bring their ideas to life. Our role is to recognize what excites them and take it one step further by saying, “Let’s explore that.” At its core, this approach is about creating meaningful learning experiences that invite students to dive deeper into their own passions and discoveries.

Can you describe your final projects you completed for the course?

Elizabeth: For my project, I wanted to address a challenge we encountered in my classroom. We had train tracks on a raised platform on the floor, surrounded by wintery decorations. While this setup was aesthetically pleasing to adults, the children showed little interest in engaging with it. What seemed inviting to us wasn’t necessarily inviting to them.

To make it more approachable, we removed the platform and deconstructed the train tracks to allow the children to have more agency, hoping this would encourage more interaction. Sure enough, these small adjustments transformed this center into a more open-ended, child-friendly play experience. As an educator, it was fascinating to rethink what would truly engage and benefit our students by observing and responding to their behavior.

Iesha: My project focused on reimagining the Block Center in our classroom and exploring how it could foster collaboration and creativity. In the past, we would clear away the blocks at the end of each day, but this year, we decided to leave them out, allowing students to build upon each other’s creations over time. My goal was to expand their imagination within this space and see how their ideas evolved.

When students requested additional materials, like rocks from the playground, we embraced their curiosity and facilitated those additions. By the end of the project, the Block Center had transformed into something far beyond just blocks, shaped entirely by the children’s imagination and intentional building. They ultimately created an entire community, complete with a pool and a hot dog stand! The final result served as clear documentation that this experiment had not

only worked but had also sparked meaningful engagement and collaboration.

Shuyi: For my project, I explored cooking with students as one of our special subjects. I believe cooking is a lifelong skill, and I wanted to spark their interest early on. Beyond that, it served as a meaningful way to introduce students to different cultures and cuisines.



This was a highly hands-on project, requiring students to engage in the step-by-step process of cooking. While we’ve made many dishes throughout the year, the project specifically documented students making pancakes—a multistep process that involved cracking eggs, adding milk and flour, mixing ingredients, cooking, and patiently waiting for the pancakes to cool. I had to remind myself to step back and observe rather than intervene to speed things up. In doing so, I realized that, just like with any new skill, cooking

is about the process, not just the final result, and the students discovered that too.

What are your key takeaways from the Project Zero course?

Elizabeth: One of my biggest takeaways was realizing the importance of documenting for the children—not just for parents or other adults. This course showed me that there are meaningful ways to encourage students to reflect on their learning, such as taking time to observe and discuss the products of their creations in the classroom.

Iesha: This course deepened my understanding of how to make projects not only purposeful but also engaging and meaningful. It also reinforced the importance of continuously refining and adapting projects to better support student learning. Additionally, it reaffirmed my belief that, as educators, we have a valuable opportunity to learn from one another and grow through collaboration.

Shuyi: A key takeaway for me is the importance of giving students firsthand experiences to help them learn and grow. Through my final project, the children learned that cooking isn’t an easy process, just like it isn’t for adults. This experience gave me a new appreciation for stepping back and allowing students to challenge themselves, fostering their growth as lifelong learners. Ultimately, experiencing the process is essential for their development. 🌱



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Faculty and Staff

Participating in meaningful professional development is a key aspect of the St. Patrick's faculty and staff experience, fostering growth as both educators and community members.

CONFERENCES ATTENDED:

- **National Association of Independent Schools People of Color Conference**
Marlena Elmore, *Grades 7 & 8 History Teacher*
Jamila Felton, *School Librarian*
Anita Hockenberry, *Kindergarten Homeroom Teacher*
Minnie Ivery, *Assistant Controller*
Mittie Johnson, *Accounts Payable Specialist*
Kankunda Klingenberg, *Religion Teacher/ Director of Service Learning*
Alana Lewis, *Grade 3 Learning Specialist*
Alexa Louis, *Lower School Science Teacher*
Iesha Myhand, *PK4 Lead Teacher*
Elizabeth Oduro, *Physical Education Teacher*
Angel Pollard, *Grade 3 Homeroom Teacher*
Kavita Rekhi, *Middle School Spanish*
Sandy Su, *Grade 3 Homeroom Teacher*
Shannon Thomas, *Grade 3 Homeroom Teacher*
Amy Thomas-Martinez, *Kindergarten Homeroom Teacher*
- **National Association of Independent Schools Annual Conference**
Jenifer Congdon, *Head of Lower School*
Rachel Levin, *Associate Head of Lower School*
Elizabeth Markowitz, *Dean of Faculty*
Dan Spector, *Associate Head of School/Head of Middle School*
Erica Thompson, *Assistant Head of School for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion*



- **Leaning Forward Annual Conference**
Marlena Elmore, *Grades 7 & 8 History Teacher*
- **NIAAA/NFHS National Athletic Director Conference**
Seamus Brophy, *Director of Athletics*
- **School Library Journal Summit**
Mara Rosenberg, *School Librarian*
- **National Business Officers Association Annual Conference**
Rebecca Kim, *Chief Financial & Operations Officer*
- **Greenbuild 2024: Built to Scale**
Chris Bolger, *Director of Development*
Sam Mason, *Assistant Head of Lower School/ Director of Sustainability*



- **American Baseball Coaches Association Convention**
Sam Hart, *Grade 4 Homeroom Teacher*
- **Council for Advancement and Support of Education Social Media and Community**
Julia Hiemstra, *Associate Director of Communication and Marketing*
- **Positive Discipline Mental Health Conference**
Debbie Weinberger, *School Counselor*
- **Elementary School Heads Association Annual Conference, National Association of Episcopal Schools Biennial Conference; Excelle Women's Leadership Group Mid-Year Meeting and Annual Conference (Host School)**
Jalene Spain Thomas, *Head of School*

WORKSHOPS/TRAINING PROGRAMS:

- **Look, Listen, Interpret, Teach: A Reggio Emilia-Inspired Approach to Supporting Individual and Group Learning (LLIT), Harvard University**
Elizabeth Gambal, *PK3 Lead Teacher*
Iesha Myhand, *PK4 Lead Teacher*
Shuyi Peng, *PK3 Associate Teacher*
- **The USA Festival of Education**
Mary Beth James, *Grade 1 Learning Specialist*
- **Pathological Demand Avoidance Training Program Emerging Leaders Seminar Series**
Debbie Weinberger, *School Counselor*
- **Dyslexia and ADHD: Connections and Treatments Neuroscience for Optimal Learning, USSB**
Allison Bragan, *Grade 1 Learning Specialist*
- **Unleashing Focus: Mastering Engaging Lessons and Behavior Management for ADHD**
Karen Clement, *Grade 1 Homeroom Teacher*
- **Parent Coaching Certification**
Julianne Reilly, *School Counselor*

- **Learning and the Brain**
Gloria Green, *Kindergarten Homeroom Teacher*
- **Certificate in School Management and Leadership, Harvard University**
Sam Mason, *Assistant Head of Lower School/ Director of Sustainability*
- **Atlantic Seaboard Dyslexia Education Center Multisensory Math**
Elizabeth Samuel, *Grade 5 Learning Specialist*
- **Association of Independent Maryland & DC Schools Learning Specialist Roundtable**
Anna Young, *Grade 2 Learning Specialist*
- **Breathe for Change: Mindfulness, Social Emotional Learning, and Yoga Teacher Training**
Una Winn, *PK3 Associate Teacher*
- **Libraries Supporting Students with Dyslexia**
Mara Rosenberg, *School Librarian*

PRESENTATIONS GIVEN:



- **“Leveraging In-House PD to Promote Faculty and Staff Belonging and Retention Initiatives” at the National Association of Independent Schools Annual Conference**
Elizabeth Markowitz, *Dean of Faculty*
Erica Thompson, *Assistant Head of School for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion*
- **“Segregation-Safe Travel: A Conversation About The Green Book and Its Implications for Today” at The Siena School**
Jamila Felton, *School Librarian*



Alumni Notes



Sydney Chapman '09

2011

Sydney Chapman '09 graduated from the University of Chicago Law School in 2024 and is now finishing up a federal clerkship at the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of New Jersey.

2013

Charles Hawkings '13 is currently working in architecture in New York City. He is working on a 30,000-square-foot home in California that is nearing completion and recently began work on a 15,000-square-foot home in San Francisco.

2015

Chloe Chapman '15 spent five years at the University of Georgia where she competed on the women's soccer team for two years and the women's basketball team for five years. She received her Bachelor's in Fashion Merchandising and just graduated with her Master's in Textiles Merchandising & Interiors in December!

Piper Phillips W'13 worked on "Stranger Things: The First Shadow" on Broadway as the Lighting Design Digital Media Controller.

2016

Eden Jones '16 is in graduate school at Towson University for school psychology. She is currently substitute teaching at St. Patrick's and working in the Extended Day Program.

Nicole Vernot-Jonas ex. '14 is currently conducting research in rural Ghana as part of her Master's in Global Health at Georgetown University. In addition to her research, she is volunteering at the local elementary school as a choir teacher and teaching her students all the songs that she remembers learning at



Chloe Chapman '15



Kelsea Persinger ex. '21

St. Patrick's, including "Inch by Inch" and "All Things Bright and Beautiful!"

2018

Mickayla Jones '18 is a junior at Occidental College, where she is studying American Studies and a Critical Theory/Social Justice double Major.

2021

Kelsea Persinger ex. '21 has committed to attending the University of Michigan in the fall and is so excited about it. (Sorry, UCLA, Georgetown, and Wake Forest!) Her St. Patrick's education was the solid foundation that helped her become a National Merit Scholarship finalist,

a Presidential Scholar Candidate, and a member of the National Cathedral School chapter of the Cum Laude Society. Kelsea continued playing basketball at National Cathedral School (NCS), after learning to love the sport at St. Patrick's. She was also a member of the NCS varsity volleyball team for the last three years. Now that college applications are behind her, Kelsea has a little bit more free time and will be performing in an NCS/St. Albans play as Juliet in "The Seussification of Romeo and Juliet," the classic Shakespeare play told in rhyme. She sees many St. Patrick's friends at NCS and STA and enjoys keeping up with the rest on social media. Go, Wolfhounds!

2022

Laney Solter ex. '22, **Lila Pommerening ex. '20**, and **Nick Bruno ex. '20** are all currently studying abroad in Rennes, France, and met up with Laney's mother, Katie Solter, our former Day School Chaplain!



Lila Pommerening ex. '20, Laney Solter ex. '22, and Nick Bruno ex. '20



Day School faculty and staff with Carlin Pappas ex. '11, Katherine Schwartz ex. '15, Nicholas Pappas ex. '12, and Peyton Schwartz ex. '11 at the St. Patrick's Christmas Chapel.



Head of School Jalene Spain Thomas joins members of the Class of 2025 in posing with a banner showcasing their secondary school acceptances for next year.



Guiding the Way

Celebrating the Class of 2025 and the Secondary School Placement Team

A YEARLONG JOURNEY OF PREPARATION, PARTNERSHIP, AND PRIDE

At St. Patrick's, the secondary school placement process is an intentional, year-long journey that begins even before Grade 8 officially starts. Led by The Rev. Amy Yount, Associate Head of Middle School and Director of Secondary School Placement, and supported by Judy Barr, Director of Health Services/Secondary School Outplacement Coordinator, Associate Head of School and Head of Middle School Dan Spector, and Head of School Jalene Spain Thomas, the Placement Team partners closely with families and students—helping them navigate every step of the process, from school research and visits to applications, interviews, and final decisions.

Their efforts go far beyond logistics: the team fosters strong relationships with secondary schools, both locally and nationally, ensuring that each student is known, supported, and set up for success. This year, their work included visiting schools like Sidwell Friends, Bullis, Episcopal, and Groton, as well as welcoming admissions officers from across the region to campus.

The remarkable results of the Class of 2025 reflect both the talents of our 33 graduates and the care and dedication of the Placement Team. With acceptances to 33 schools and 22 schools ultimately chosen, our students will attend a wide array of independent day, Catholic, boarding, and public schools next fall.

**CLASS OF 2025:
ACCEPTANCES & DESTINATIONS**

DAY SCHOOL DESTINATIONS

- Sidwell Friends School – 4 students
- National Cathedral School – 3 students
- Bullis School – 3 students
- The Potomac School – 3 students
- St. Andrew's Episcopal School – 3 students
- DeMatha Catholic High School – 2 students
- Georgetown Day School – 2 students
- St. Albans School – 2 students
- St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School – 2 students
- Episcopal High School – 2 students
- Georgetown Preparatory School – 1 student
- Landon School – 1 student
- McLean School – 1 student
- Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart – 1 student
- Lightridge High School – 1 student

ADDITIONAL ACCEPTANCES

- Archbishop Carroll High School
- Bishop O'Connell High School
- Bishop McNamara High School
- Edmund Burke School
- The Field School
- Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School
- Gonzaga College High School
- Holton-Arms School
- Connelly School of the Holy Child
- The Madeira School
- Maret School
- St. Anselm's Abbey School
- St. John's College High School
- Washington Waldorf School



Associate Head of School and Head of Middle School Dan Spector; The Rev. Amy Yount, Associate Head of Middle School and Director of Secondary School Placement; and Head of School Jalene Spain Thomas on a visit to Georgetown Preparatory School.

“Ryan has had many amazing experiences in her 10 years at St. Patrick's, but the outplacement process was absolutely at or near the top. She chose the schools she wanted to explore, completed the applications on her own, met with admissions teams and students, and ultimately decided where she wanted to go, focusing her energy on making it happen. St. Patrick's offered tremendous support, but she truly owned the process. There was uncertainty throughout, but watching her navigate it gives us confidence that it will only enrich her high school experience and equip her to tackle hard things in the future.”

– David Siegel, P '25 and ex. '28

Outplacement at St. Patrick's

BOARDING SCHOOL DESTINATIONS

- Groton School – 1 student
- Episcopal High School – 2 students

ADDITIONAL BOARDING SCHOOL ACCEPTANCES

- Deerfield Academy
- The Hotchkiss School
- The Lawrenceville School
- Phillips Academy Andover
- Woodberry Forest School

FIVE-YEAR TRENDS

Nearly 200 graduates over the last five years have attended a wide range of schools.

MOST FREQUENT DAY SCHOOL DESTINATIONS

- Sidwell Friends School (16)
- Bullis School (14)
- Landon School (14)
- St. Andrew's Episcopal School (11)
- Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart (10)
- St. Albans School (9)
- National Cathedral School (8)
- Holton-Arms School (8)
- Georgetown Day School (7)
- Maret School (6)
- The Potomac School (5)

Boarding School placements in recent years: About 25 students have chosen schools such as Berkshire, Choate Rosemary Hall, Episcopal, Mercersburg, Millbrook, and Lawrenceville and others.

We are proud of our students for their achievements and grateful to our outplacement team for their unwavering commitment to helping each student find the right path forward. Once a Wolfhound, always a Wolfhound!



The Rev. Amy Yount and Head of School Jalene Spain Thomas catch up with St. Patrick's alum Cubby D. '23 during a Placement Team visit to Sidwell Friends School.



A snapshot of the Class of 2025's impressive secondary school acceptances.



2024-2025
ANNUAL
FUND

INFINITE VALUE,
INFINITE PROMISE

THE ANNUAL FUND IS THE CORNERSTONE OF OUR COMMUNITY'S PHILANTHROPIC EFFORTS. It stands as the second-largest revenue source for our operating budget, behind tuition, and enables us to enrich and broaden student opportunities beyond what tuition alone can provide.

The Annual Fund bridges the gap between tuition and the full cost of a St. Patrick's education, and also ensures we can maintain a healthy financial aid budget that supports socioeconomic diversity. Your tax-deductible contribution will support our students by enabling us to lay a strong educational foundation and empower them to become the leaders and innovators of the future.

Thank you for supporting our students' infinite value and infinite promise! We are grateful for your generous support.



To give or pledge to the 2024-2025 Annual Fund now, please visit our website at www.stpatsdc.org/donate or scan the QR code before June 30.

HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED MORE INFORMATION?


Please contact Kyle Tyson, Director of Annual Giving, at (202) 342-7012 or TysonK@stpatsdc.org.




4700 Whitehaven Parkway, NW
Washington, D.C. 20007
www.stpatsdc.org

Follow us on SOCIAL MEDIA

to stay up to date with St. Patrick's news
and catch a glimpse of community fun!

 @stpatswolfhounds

 www.facebook.com/StPatsDC

 St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School

SAVE THE DATES

Wednesday, August 27
New Parent Dinner

Tuesday, September 2
School Opening for
PK3-Grade 8

Friday, September 5
Opening Chapel for
Students & Parents
(Kindergarten-Grade 8)

Thursday, September 25
Opening Chapel for
Students & Parents
(PK3/PK4)



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE GAME ANSWER KEY

- | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Dancing Hamster
in Green
Sequined Dress | 3. St. Patrick's
Wolfhound
Stuffed Animal | 6. Sparkly Gold Star |
| 2. Go Blue Devils!
Duke Alumni
Button | 4. St. Patrick's
Lapel Pin | 7. Green St. Patrick's
Slinky |
| | 5. Mrs. Spain Thomas'
Reading Glasses | 8. St. Patrick's Green
Stanley Mug |
| | | 9. Wooden Apple |

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.