Cultivating Confidence: **How Holy Child Prepares Students to Lead with Virtue**

By Brian McBride, Head of School
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What distinguishes Holy Child's approach to education?

As an independent, Catholic, co-educational school, Holy Child School at Rosemont has a unique identity among Main Line schools with a distinctive mission to provide a values-based, transformational student experience. The unwavering ethos of educating children in a nurturing, joyful environment has been and continues to be what distinguishes Holy Child as a school where the development of the whole child is at the center of everything we do.

Our challenging and creative program centers on the philosophy that happy children learn better. For over 75 years, generations of devoted Holy Child educators have embraced this philosophy and witnessed the benefits of a joyful approach to learning, which promotes curiosity, wellbeing, and confidence in boys and girls. As an inclusive, Catholic community, we welcome all faiths and continually seek to foster a sense of belonging. We base education "on trust and reverence for the dignity of every human being," as our mission calls us to do. Within our community, this means that each student is seen, cared for, and treated with love, respect, and patience.

Uplifting opportunities for every child to serve, pray, perform, and public speak are embedded into the heart of our program. We have seen the impact of providing these formative experiences: Holy Child graduates shine well beyond the halls of our school and are well prepared for the next step in their education, entering top area high schools as kind, confident, and ethical leaders.

How does Holy Child deliver on the promise of educating the whole child?

Cornelia Connelly, the Foundress of Holy Child Schools, recognized the vital connection between children's health, wellness, and learning long before we had the term "wellbeing." Shaped by her philosophy, a Holy Child education is uniquely focused on educating the whole child—mind, body, and spirit. At Holy Child, we believe that health and wellness are intrinsically linked to a child's ability to learn and thrive in school.

Compelled by the health and wellness needs and challenges of today's youth, Holy Child prioritizes innovative, mission-driven wellbeing initiatives that are designed to nurture, cultivate, and strengthen the wellbeing of every student. We intentionally integrate health and wellness into all aspects of our curriculum and school programming to deliver a truly holistic education. In doing so, we empower our students to explore and cultivate their wellbeing.

Initiatives designed to strengthen their social-emotional intelligence, teach healthy life skills and practices, build resilience, and foster a deep sense of belonging in our community are core tenets of Holy Child's commitment to a 'whole-istic' approach to the wellbeing of each student. When we tend to the health of each student's mind, body, and spirit, the optimal learning environment is realized, providing a secure foundation for both academic achievements and ambitions. It is our goal that every Holy Child student graduates from our school with adaptable skills and a balanced, resilient mindset that sustains lifelong wellbeing.

How does Holy Child empower its students to become leaders?

As I embark on my third year as head of school, I have come to appreciate Holy Child's intentional approach to promoting students' personal growth and confidence, which results in graduates who are self-assured, composed, and responsible leaders. Personal growth is made possible by our small-school environment where students feel supported taking chances beyond their comfort zone: they practice public speaking in grade-level plays, lead the whole school in prayer at community gatherings, and mentor younger students through our Buddy Program.

Opportunities to lead take many forms and happen often at Holy Child. With ample practice comes comfortability and confidence, and by the time our students reach 8th grade, their poise as leaders of the school is evident. At the center of these opportunities is a mutual trust that our students, faculty, and staff sustain through shared values, making Holy Child a school where children can try new things, learn from mistakes, and grow in their confidence.

As a faith-filled school, we strive to develop virtuous leaders who are prepared and willing to do meaningful work. Cultivating virtues within each student is essential to their personal growth, as it shapes their character and develops a strong moral compass. Born out of this goal and the vision of our new strategic plan is our Virtuous Leadership Program, designed to cultivate ethical and moral leadership qualities in our students as part of their holistic development. Through our program, Holy Child students become eminently prepared as learners and leaders. Shaped with essential values and virtues that propel them to become uncommonly kind, confident, and ethical leaders, our graduates shine and excel in the next phase of their lives.

Brian McBride has led Holy Child School at Rosemont as its eighth head of school since July 1, 2023. With over 30 years of experience in independent school education, he brings a wealth of knowledge and perspective, having served as a teacher, advisor, coach, and administrator. In addition to working at McDonogh School and Concord Academy, McBride spent a notable 13 years of his career at The Haverford School, affording him a deep understanding of the independent school landscapein the greater Philadelphia area. McBride earned his bachelor's degree from The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and a master's degree from Loyola University Maryland.

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