

# ST. PATRICK'S *Press*



SPRING 2026

Student Athlete Spotlight:

Harrison M. '26 & Katie A. '26

Making Music Together:

The Orff Approach at St. Patrick's

Alumni Spotlight: Kate Brady '14



# *A Groovy Night for a Great Cause*

The St. Patrick's community came together in joyful celebration for this year's IDEALS Fund-A-Scholar event, *A Disco Green Affair: 70 & Groovy*. For one unforgettable evening, the gym was transformed into a vibrant, 1970s-inspired "Studio 4700," where parents, alumni, faculty, and friends gathered to celebrate the spirit of IDEALS: Inclusion, Diversity, Excellence, Agency, Learning, and Scholarship.

Led by co-chairs Casey Harte P. '33, '35 and Katherine Trainor P. '33, '34, the night was filled with energy and delight. Head of School Jalene Spain Thomas brought down the house with a showstopping tribute to Diana Ross, reminding us that "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," while guests fully embraced the theme—complete with memorable appearances by Associate Head of School/Head of Middle School Dan Spector as Rod Stewart and Assistant Head of School for Academics/Head of Upper Elementary Jen Congdon as Farrah Fawcett. Bidding was lively, the dance floor stayed full, and the joy of the St. Patrick's community was on full display.

At its heart, IDEALS supports Fund-A-Scholar, ensuring that a St. Patrick's education remains accessible to talented students from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds.

If you were unable to attend—or would still like to take part—you can make a gift to Fund-A-Scholar and help strengthen the vibrant, inclusive community that defines St. Patrick's. Please contact Assistant Head of School for Institutional Advancement, Adelaide Barrett for more information.



Co-Chairs Casey Harte (P. '33, '35) and Katherine Trainor (P. '33, '34) at the 51st IDEALS Fundraiser.

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**ST. PATRICK'S**  
*Press*

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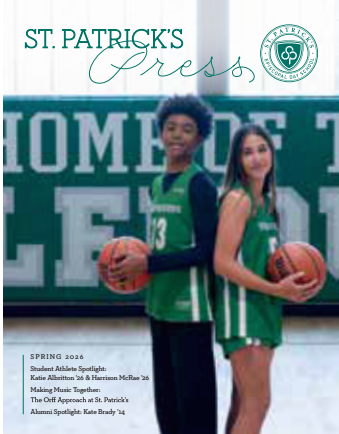
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**On the cover:**

For the first time, the *St. Patrick's Press* proudly spotlights two graduating Grade 8 student-athletes, Harrison M. '26 and Katie A. '26, who excel just as impressively off the court and field as they do on them.



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*From the Head of School*

## A Year of Growth, Purpose, and Community

### Dear St. Patrick's Community,

**A**s we approach the close of another school year, we find ourselves reflecting on all that has defined these last several months together, including moments of discovery, growth, connection, and joy. It has been a year marked not only by achievement, but by a deepening sense of purpose across our community.

This year, we shared the *St. Patrick's Snapshot*, a moment to pause and articulate who we are and where we are headed. What emerged clearly is something we experience every day: St. Patrick's is a place where rigor and nurture go hand in hand, where each child is known deeply, and where learning is rooted in purpose. Ours is a community grounded in belonging, strengthened through partnership, and inspired by a shared commitment to preparing students for a future we cannot yet fully imagine.

Across our campuses, this mission is visible in countless ways. It is in the joyful sounds of students gathered in Chapel, in the curiosity sparked during hands-on discovery in classrooms, and in the care students show one another on the playground and beyond. It is in the dedication of our faculty and staff, who challenge and support each child in equal measure, and in the trust and partnership of our families, who make this work possible.

At St. Patrick's we believe in the infinite value of every child. We strive to cultivate not only strong scholars, but compassionate, confident individuals who are equipped to lead lives of meaning and impact. This work requires intention. It

calls us to remain grounded in our Episcopal identity while also looking ahead; ensuring that our program continues to evolve, innovate, and meet the needs of the world our students will inherit.

As you read this issue of the *St. Patrick's Press*, I hope you see these values reflected in the stories of our students, faculty, and community. From *Around Campus* in **School News** (p. 4) to *From Memory to Masterpiece: Grade 5 Explores Place Through Writing and Art* (p. 20), each story offers a window into the joyful and purposeful learning happening every day. You'll also find inspiration in *Making Music Together: The Orff Approach at St. Patrick's* (p. 26) and in our **Alumni Corner** (p. 35), where the journey of Kate Brady '14, Product Designer for Plus-Plus Toys, reflects the lasting impact of a St. Patrick's education. Each page offers a glimpse into the vibrant life of our school and the many ways our mission is lived each day.

Thank you for your continued partnership and for the trust you place in St. Patrick's. It is a privilege to walk alongside your children as they grow, discover, and become.

Go, Wolfhounds!

With gratitude,

Jalene Spain Thomas  
Head of School



## Around Campus

### POPSICLE PARTY

For the second year in a row, our community gathered in July to enjoy popsicles and ice cream while students played and families connected. This joyful event has quickly become one of our community's favorite traditions!



### NEW PARENT DINNER

In late August we hosted our New Parent Dinner, complete with drinks from Vintage Views mobile bar and a delicious spread of fajitas and all the fixings from Uncle Julio's!



### PK PARENTS VISITING DAY

PK Parents Visiting Day was a joyful morning of Chapel, connection, and classroom visits, as parents and special friends experienced learning and daily routines in action.



### GREEN & WHITE NIGHT

The 11th annual Green & White Night was a fun and energetic evening where more than two hundred community members donning green and white attire gathered to greet friends and kick off our Annual Fund, chaired by Ambassador Nada Hamadeh (P. '29) and Dr. Gerard Moawad (P. '29) (not pictured).

### PARENTS AS MATH PARTNERS MORNINGS

We were excited to welcome Lower School and Upper Elementary parents into our classrooms for Parents as Math Partners Mornings. These impactful visits allowed parents to see our math curriculum in action.

### PARENT SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

Throughout the year, St. Patrick's offered a range of opportunities for parents to learn, connect, and grow, including introductory workshops on Positive Discipline and SPACE (Supporting Parenting for Anxious Childhood Emotions), three thoughtfully facilitated book clubs, and a monthly support group for parents of neurodiverse students.



### ST. FRANCIS DAY CHAPEL

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



### DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY CHAPELS

We marked Martin Luther King Jr. Day with divisional Chapels across Campus. At the K-5 Chapel, Day School Learning Specialist Paula Young Shelton shared reflections on the experiences of her father, Andrew Jackson Young, Jr.— a politician, diplomat, and civil rights activist who served as executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.



### ST. PATRICK'S DAY CHAPEL

Honoring tradition, the St. Patrick's Day service featured the stirring sound of bagpipes, Irish tunes from the Grade 7 Handbell group, and a joyful rendition of the Garden Song sung by faculty and staff.

### PRINTMAKING STUDY IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD DIVISION

This year, PK4B students designed and carved their own printing blocks to create original prints. The multi-step process called for careful attention and a great deal of patience.



### GRADES 4-8 STUDENTS IMPRESS AT ANNUAL SPELLING BEE

Our annual Spelling Bee showcased the impressive skills and dedication of our ten finalists from Grades 4-8, with students cheering their classmates on in an atmosphere of excitement and camaraderie. After over 20 intense rounds, Christopher A. '26 won the competition.



### GRADE 2 BRINGS HISTORY TO LIFE AT THE SWAHILI COAST SOKO MARKET

Inspired by teacher Crystal Buffington's fellowship travels to Africa, Grade 2's immersive "Soko Market" brought their African Studies unit to life, engaging students in hands-on, sensory experiences that deepened their understanding of African civilizations, trade, and cultural exchange while highlighting the continent's lasting global impact.



### DAY SCHOOL STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN STEAM CHALLENGE

In February, Day School students competed in the STEAM Challenge at Foxcroft School, a girls-only day of hands-on collaboration and problem-solving. The Terrific Turbines, composed of Elise C.G. '27, Clara F. '27, Annelise P. '27, and Zadie S. '26 earned an impressive bronze medal in the math/nutrition/science challenge focused on Olympic curling!



### STUDENTS COMPETE IN THE 45th ANNUAL MICHAEL C. LEUTHE RECITATION CONTEST

Annelise P. '27 won first place in the 45th Annual Michael C. Leuthe Recitation Contest with Emma Watson's HeForShe United Nations speech, while Kiran P. '26 and Parker S. '28 tied for second, and Lyric M. '27 placed third, as students in Grades 5-8 delivered powerful performances that celebrated literature and public speaking.



### ST. PATRICK GRADUATES RETURN TO SHARE THEIR AI EXPERIENCES

In March, six graduates of St. Patrick's returned to campus to share their experiences with AI as high school students. Representing four independent schools and two public schools, these students offered unique perspectives on what our Grade 8 graduates will encounter as they head off to their receiving schools.

### THE WONDER OF THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANTS

The Christmas Pageants, brimming with beauty, tradition, and joyful spirit, ushered in the holiday season for children and their families in December with Grade 2 and middle school musical solos.



### VOICES OF THE SEASON: ANNUAL HOLIDAY CONCERT

Our Holiday Concert brought the community together for a festive evening of music in the Nave, featuring choirs, handbells, and Orff Ensembles. Students and faculty performed a joyful mix of global selections, celebrating the season in multiple languages and styles.

### GRADE 4 MUSICAL PERFORMANCE: A WALK IN THE WOODS

Grade 4 students brought *A Walk in the Woods* to life through a creative performance inspired by Charley Harper's art. With guidance from Mrs. Petersen, students helped develop a piece featuring music, movement, body percussion, and speech.



### SPANISH CURRICULUM TAKES CENTER STAGE AT CAFÉ DE POETAS

Students celebrated Latin culture through a lively performance featuring poetry recitations and songs, highlighting Spanish-speaking countries, cuisines, and notable poets. 🇵🇪

# WOLFHOUND WATCH



The following are results from the 2025-2026 soccer, cross country, and basketball teams. 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**

7-5

**CAC Tournament**

2nd Place

**Season Highlight**

CAC Championship game vs Langley

**CAC All-Stars**

Nora A.  
Katie A.  
Ava W.

**BOYS VARSITY SOCCER**

**Coaches**

Brodie Edgerton  
Gordon Jones

**Record**

6-4-1

**CAC Tournament**

3rd Place

**Season Highlight**

Victory over Sheridan

**CAC All-Stars**

Sebastian M.  
Harrison M.  
Aiden S.  
Holton Y.

**GIRLS GRADE 6 SOCCER**

**Coaches**

Annabelle Galasso  
Nathalia Terra

**Record**

5-5

**CAC Tournament**

3rd Place

**Season Highlight**

CAC Semi-Final game vs Langley

**BOYS GRADE 6 SOCCER**

**Coaches**

Dean Lanois  
Pablo Ortiz

**Record**

4-6

**CAC Tournament**

3rd Place

**Season Highlight**

Victory over Westminster

**JV & VARSITY CROSS COUNTRY**

**Coaches**

Allan Boyarski  
Julia Hiemstra  
Jessica Thornton

**Season Highlight**

The girls JV team won the 2nd place banner at the CAC championship meet

**WINTER SEASON**

**BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL**

**Coaches**

Kenny Brewton  
Nicholas Fennel

**Record**

8-6

**CAC Tournament**

3rd Place

**Season Highlight**

Winning the Washington Episcopal Dragon Tournament

**CAC All-Stars**

Harrison M.  
Kellan P.  
Aiden S.  
Holton Y.

**GIRLS VARSITY BASKETBALL**

**Coach**

Clifton Cottom

**Record**

7-6

**CAC Tournament**

3rd place

**Season Highlight**

Wins over Sheridan and Congressional

**CAC All-Stars**

Nora A.  
Katie A.  
Ella H.

**BOYS JV BASKETBALL**

**Coaches**

Kenny Brewton  
Derek Owens

**Record**

14-0



**CAC Tournament**

1st Place

**Season Highlight**

CAC Championship game win over Congressional



**GIRLS JV BASKETBALL**

**Coach**

Shyrone Palms

**Record**

2-12

**CAC Tournament**

5th Place

**Season Highlight**

Defeating Langley twice in one season





STUDENT  
ATHLETE

SP

TLIGHT



**“I know I can always get better. Constructive feedback from teammates and coaches motivates me to keep improving.”**

**– Katie A. '26**

## Katie A. '26

*On any given afternoon, you can find Katie A. '26 leading the charge on the court or field—encouraging teammates, chasing down loose balls, and playing with heart. A captain in both soccer and basketball, she reflects on confidence, leadership, and the moments that have shaped her athletic journey at St. Patrick's.*

**Q: What sports have you played at St. Patrick's, and which has been your favorite?**

I've played soccer and basketball at St. Patrick's. My favorite is definitely soccer because I play that outside of school, too. All my friends here play soccer as well—we love to play together and it's been really fun to see one another grow as athletes.

**Q: How would you describe yourself as an athlete in three words?**

Competitive, determined, and a leader. As a Grade 8 student, I've been captain of both the soccer and basketball teams, so I've had the opportunity to lead Grade 7 students and set a good example.

**Q: Is there a season, game, or moment at St. Patrick's that stands out most to you?**

Last year, when I scored my first three-pointer in basketball. The Grade 8 students I really looked up to were cheering me on, and it was a great moment for me.

**Q: What have you learned about teamwork from your coaches or teammates here?**

Teamwork is one of the most important parts of sports. I've learned that if everyone is trying to do it alone, it won't work. Every player is valuable, and you have to communicate and work together to succeed.

**Q: What does being a good teammate mean to you?**

Being supportive—cheering each other on and helping each other up when you fall down. Everyone makes mistakes in sports, and it makes a big difference when your teammates encourage you so you can move forward.

**Q: Can you share a time when a teammate or coach made a big impact on you?**

I would definitely say Coach C [Clifton Cottom], who has been my basketball coach throughout Middle School. He particularly made a big impact on me during my Grade 7 season—I wasn't very confident then, but he played me alongside the Grade 8 girls and focused on what I needed to improve. That really boosted my confidence and made me feel like I could do better. Once I believed in myself more, my performance improved too.

**Q: What's been your biggest challenge in sports, and how did you work through it?**

My biggest challenge has been confidence. Starting out in Grade 6, it was hard comparing myself to older, more experienced players. But having supportive friends and teammates helped me build my confidence over time. Being at St. Patrick's for so long has also helped me because we developed strong connections and understand each other on the field and court without having to say anything.



**Competitive, determined,  
and a leader.**



## Harrison M. '26

*Whether he's running point, celebrating a championship win, or putting in extra hours on the court, Harrison M. '26 brings passion and resilience to every game. A multi-sport athlete with big dreams and an even bigger love for basketball, he reflects on teamwork, leadership, and the mindset that keeps him striving for more.*

**Q: What sports have you played at St. Patrick's, and which has been your favorite?**

I've played soccer, basketball, and baseball. Basketball is definitely my favorite—we've won back-to-back championships, and it's the sport I've grown up playing. I also play basketball outside of school, pretty much year-round.

**Q: How would you describe yourself as an athlete in three words?**

Resilient, passionate, and a champion.

**Q: Is there a season, game, or moment at St. Patrick's that stands out most to you?**

The Dragon Cup tournament we played at during the 2025-2026 basketball season definitely stands out. We ended up winning the whole thing, but I remember the first game in particular as being really special. Another player [Kellan P. '27] and I share point guard responsibilities—he plays point guard and I play guard, but sometimes we switch—and we had great chemistry that game. Together, we scored around 30 points. It was exciting to see how well we worked together.

**Q: What have you learned about teamwork from your coaches or teammates here?**

Teamwork is the key to any sport—and really anything in life. It's never just one person. You need everyone working together to succeed.

**Q: Do you hope to continue playing sports in high school? Why is that important to you?**

Yes, definitely soccer, and maybe basketball. Sports have taught me resilience, communication, and teamwork—skills I wouldn't have learned as easily otherwise—so I am very grateful.

**Q: What goals do you have for yourself as an athlete over the next few years?**

I want to try new positions, continue improving, and work on communicating more about what the team needs. I want to focus on growing as a player and helping others grow, too.

**Q: What motivates you to keep improving?**

I want to be the best version of myself. I've developed a lot of confidence in

myself over the years, but I know I can always get better. Constructive feedback from teammates and coaches motivates me to keep improving.

**Q: Who is an athlete you admire, and why?**

Lindsey Vonn. She is a legend! She has faced so many injuries, including tearing her ACL right before the Olympics, but she got back up and chose to compete. She has no fear, which is so inspiring.

**Q: What advice would you give to younger students who are just starting school sports?**

Don't worry about being judged. Be yourself, practice if you want to improve, and do your best. No one is there to be mean—just go out confidently and try your hardest.

**“Teamwork is the key to any sport—and really anything in life. It’s never just one person. You need everyone working together to succeed.”**

*– Harrison M. '26*

**Q: What does being a good teammate mean to you?**

To me, it means caring about others, stepping up as a leader, trying new things, and facing challenges in a positive way. Challenges should help you grow, not hold you back.

**Q: Can you share a time when a teammate or coach made a big impact on you?**

In Grade 6, during the championship basketball game, our point guard got injured and I had to step into that role. I was nervous, but my coach told me to

just have fun and play my game. That helped me relax—and we ended up winning, and we ended up winning.

**Q: What’s been your biggest challenge in sports, and how did you work through it?**

Managing my emotions and not taking things personally. After one tough basketball game this past season, I felt like I let the team down. Coach Kenny reminded me not to dwell on it and to focus on the next game. That helped me learn to move forward in a positive way.

**Q: Do you hope to continue playing sports in high school? Why is that important to you?**

Yes, and I hope to go pro one day. I’d love to play for the 76ers or the Wizards. Sports are important to me because they’re a big part of who I am and what I love to do.

**Q: What goals do you have for yourself as an athlete over the next few years?**

My goal is to play professionally. If that doesn’t happen, I’d love to coach and stay involved in athletics.

**Q: What motivates you to keep improving?**

My parents motivate me. They remind me to move forward and not dwell on the past. That mindset helps me stay focused on getting better. I am inspired by my dad, who was a really good basketball player when he was younger.

**Q: Who is an athlete you admire, and why?**

I have several! I admire LeBron James, Kyrie Irving, and Kevin Garnett. LeBron is a legend and a leader. Kyrie is incredibly skilled and humble, and he helps younger players grow. Kevin was a strong, intense, physical player—really just great all around. I try to learn different things from each of them.

**Q: What advice would you give to younger students who are just starting school sports?**

Leave the past in the past and don’t take mistakes personally. There’s always another opportunity ahead. Most importantly, have fun—the game isn’t that serious. 🏀



**Resilient, passionate,  
and a champion.**

# *Infinite Value*





## Be Infinitely You

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.



## Building Fine Motor Skills and Imagination in the Early Childhood Division



*At St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School, developing fine motor skills in the Early Childhood Division is more than just preparing students for writing—it's about fostering independence, creativity, and confidence. To learn more about how our youngest learners are building these foundational skills, we spoke with Early Childhood Lead Teachers Elizabeth Gambal '06 (PK3B) and Iesha Myhand (PK4A).*



## WHAT ARE FINE MOTOR SKILLS AND WHY DO THEY MATTER?

“Fine motor skills are the little movements that use your eyes, fingers, and hands—pinching, tugging, grasping, and coordinating,” explains Elizabeth Gambal ’06. “They help strengthen hand muscles, build stamina, and are critical for writing, drawing, painting, and early reading.”

Iesha Myhand adds, “Fine motor skills also support everyday tasks like putting on shoes, zipping coats, or opening a lunchbox. Developing these skills early helps children gain independence and builds a foundation for a lifetime of success.”

Students enter PK3 and PK4 with a wide range of fine motor abilities, often influenced by previous exposure to activities that challenge their coordination. Outdoor play, climbing, swinging, digging in the garden, or even manipulating sticks and sand can all contribute to developing these essential skills.

## INTENTIONAL SKILL-BUILDING IN THE CLASSROOM

In the classroom, fine motor development happens across multiple centers and activities. From chalk drawing and beading to sewing and observational drawing, children practice hand-eye coordination, pincer grasp, and multi-step directions. Gambal notes, “Even sewing in PK3 is a big task for

little hands. It helps students strengthen the muscles in their fingertips, coordinate movements, and develop patience.”

Sewing also introduces the concept of delayed gratification and reflection. “We encourage children to think about how they made something, what steps they took, and what materials they used,” Gambal explains. “It helps them connect with the process and understand the purpose behind their work, which is a key part of metacognition.”

## PERSONALIZED HANDWRITING PRACTICE

Handwriting is introduced thoughtfully and individually in PK4. Myhand describes the process: “At the start of the year, students sign in during open house so we can assess their fine motor abilities. Some may need fat crayons or golf pencils to practice proper grip, while others are ready for standard pencils. Every morning, they practice writing their name, gradually adding letters, curves, and lines as their skills develop.”

This personalized approach allows teachers to differentiate instruction, helping each child progress at their own pace. From tracing letters to writing independently, the exercises build confidence and prepare students for more advanced writing tasks in Kindergarten and beyond.



## FINE MOTOR SKILLS AT HOME

Both teachers emphasize the importance of continuing fine motor practice at

home. Activities such as climbing playground equipment, using tongs to pick up objects, playing with Play-Doh, or helping with buttons and zippers can all strengthen small muscles. Myhand adds, “Even letting children open their water bottles or put on their coats independently builds hand strength, coordination, and confidence.”



## A FOUNDATION FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

Fine motor development at St. Patrick's is integrated into a play-based, multi-sensory approach. Through art, movement, and hands-on activities, students strengthen their hands, build patience, and enhance their problem-solving skills—all while engaging their imagination.

As Myhand says, “Early exposure to tasks and skills that require fine-motor development helps best prepare our students for kindergarten. Mastering PK level skills and offering students praise for their strengths and supporting areas for growth all helps to build a growth mindset in our youngest learners — a skill they can use beyond the classroom.”

By combining intentional instruction, creative exploration, and individualized support, the Day School's Early Childhood Division ensures that children develop the physical and cognitive foundations they need to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. 🌱



The Art of the Catch

Design Thinking in Grade 1



*In Grade 1 at St. Patrick's, stories don't just stay on the page—they come to life in imaginative and unexpected ways. Students dive into the world of *The Gingerbread Man* and its many variations before taking their learning a step further in the Student Design and Collaboration Lab. There, what begins as a familiar folktale transforms into a hands-on design challenge, inviting students to think creatively, solve problems, and bring a bit of magic to their work as they attempt to catch their runaway gingerbread creations.*

For Grade 1 Homeroom Teacher Annie Miller, who has been with the Day School since 2009, the beloved tale of *The Gingerbread Man* offers the perfect entry point into deeper learning. In Grade 1, students spend time exploring folktales from around the world, including cumulative tales—stories that build upon themselves through repetition and pattern. With so many playful and imaginative versions of *The Gingerbread Man* to

enjoy, Miller explains, students quickly become invested in the story and its characters.

That enthusiasm makes it a natural fit for a Design Lab experience. While students are introduced to the space in kindergarten, first grade marks a more immersive entry point—one where they are ready to engage more deeply in the design process. The gingerbread unit, which unfolds over the course of several days, blends literacy, imagination, and

hands-on problem-solving in a way that feels both purposeful and magical. After a week of reading different versions of the story, students create their own gingerbread characters—only to discover the next day that they have mysteriously run away.

From there, the challenge begins.

When students arrive in the Design Lab, they are tasked with designing traps to catch their runaway gingerbread

babies. A note left behind by the cookies offers important clues: they like candy, they want to play, and they don't want to sit still. Drawing from both the text and their own experiences, students begin to think about what their gingerbread creations might need or want. In doing so, they are introduced—naturally and playfully—to one of the core principles of design thinking: empathy.

As students build their traps, they continue to receive “feedback” in the form of additional notes from the gingerbread babies. Some might say they are scared; others ask for more candy or more engaging places to play. This feedback becomes a clear and motivating prompt for revision. Rather than feeling discouraged when something doesn't work, students are eager to improve their designs. The process becomes one of experimentation and iteration, helping to build flexibility, resilience, and creative problem-solving skills.

For Miller, what stands out most each year is not a particular trap or

clever solution, but the students' joy and wholehearted investment in the experience. They fully embrace the magic of the project, engaging with it as play rather than work. “They're not thinking about all the skills they're building,” she reflects. “It just feels like fun.” Behind the scenes, however, the learning is rich and intentional. The project, which Miller originally developed alongside a colleague and refined over time, incorporates key elements of the design process—planning, testing, and revising—while maintaining a sense of wonder.

The Design Lab itself plays an essential role in that experience. For students, it is a space filled with purpose, possibility, and independence. Equipped with a wide array of materials and tools, it allows them to bring their ideas to life while working alongside their peers. Even as each child focuses on their own trap, collaboration happens organically through shared resources, conversations, and the collective energy of the room. Students also learn to care



for the space, reinforcing a sense of responsibility and community.

At its core, the gingerbread traps project is about more than catching cookies. Miller hopes students come away with the understanding that they can approach problems creatively, and that it's okay when solutions don't work the first time. The experience encourages them to persist, adapt, and try again, building confidence in their ability to navigate challenges. Just as importantly, it nurtures a love of stories and a sense of wonder that is still very much alive at this age, when imagination and reality often blur in the most delightful ways.

This work reflects the broader goals of the Grade 1 program at St. Patrick's. Across subjects, students are encouraged to see themselves as capable learners; whether they are decoding a tricky word, solving a math problem, or designing a gingerbread trap. Through experiences like this one, they begin to develop the independence, resilience, and confidence that will carry them forward, both in the classroom and beyond. 🍪





*From Memory to Masterpiece*

## Grade 5 Explores Place Through Writing and Art

In an interdisciplinary assignment, Grade 5 students were invited to connect literature, writing, and visual art by reflecting on the significance of place. Through personal narrative, they developed vivid settings grounded in sensory detail, then translated those written experiences into original landscape artworks—deepening both their storytelling and artistic expression.

One class used the book *Esperanza Rising* as their inspiration. In this book the protagonist pauses to look back at her family home for the last time—a moment filled with memory, emotion, and a deep sense of place. Inspired by this powerful scene, students explored

what it means to say goodbye to a meaningful location by writing personal narratives about a favorite place, imagining they were seeing it for the last time.

Some students drew from vivid memories of a recent outing or the overnight experience, while others chose places that hold long-standing personal significance. Through their writing, they focused on incorporating rich sensory details—what they could see, hear, smell, taste, and feel—bringing their chosen settings to life on the page.

This writing experience became the foundation for their work in Art, where

students translated their narratives into landscape pieces. As they developed their visual representations, they explored and experimented with how artists use color, mark-making, and composition to add emotion to images of places, and applied their learning to their plans to capture the mood and memory embedded in their writing. The result is a collection of deeply personal artworks that reflect both thoughtful storytelling and creative expression.

Together, these pieces highlight the meaningful intersection of literacy and visual arts, showcasing how students can use multiple mediums to explore memory, perspective, and place. 🍀



Sketches peeking out from under experiments with the chalk pastel process on different colored papers.



Final chalk pastel drawings depicting locations from the Grade 5 overnight or personally significant places at home or while traveling.



## Middle School Logowear Club Designs the Next Generation of Wolfhound Spirit Wear





The Middle School Logowear Club at St. Patrick's continues to be a dynamic example of student leadership, creativity, and school spirit in action. What began as a student-initiated idea has grown into a beloved tradition that now plays a meaningful role in shaping the look and feel of Wolfhound spirit wear across the community.

The club was launched in the 2022–2023 school year by Kyler Garcia '23 and Samuel Wood '23, who designed flannel pajama pants and hoodies that quickly sold out—setting the tone for what would become a highly anticipated annual initiative. In 2023–2024, the team expanded to include Brit Anderson '24, Sebastian Elink-Schuurman '24, Thomas Lapham '24, and Owen Dyer '24, who created a popular line of hoodies and a crewneck sweatshirt featuring the DC flag, a design that resonated strongly with the community.

By the 2024–2025 school year, interest in the club had grown significantly, leading to its expansion into five design groups. Students spent several months developing a wide range of concepts, including backpacks, decals, socks, hoodies, and trucker hats. Their work culminated in presentations to the Parents Association Executive Committee, which voted on

the final designs to be produced—an authentic real-world experience in design, collaboration, and decision-making.

Now part of the weekly Middle School Clubs program, the Logowear Club meets once a week with mentor and Director of Development Chris Bolger. Students have already taken part in several enriching experiences, including a field trip to the Georgetown University school store for design inspiration, a recent collaboration with the Communication & Marketing Office to help introduce a new Wolfhound logo, and a session with an apparel industry expert.

Throughout the year, students are responsible not only for designing but also for helping market their creations, all while considering budget and production realities. With Logowear typically raising around \$15,000 annually for the Parents Association, the club makes a significant contribution to the Day School while giving students a meaningful opportunity to see their ideas come to life.

This year's photos capture students in the midst of that creative process—working together to design new merchandise featuring the updated Wolfhound logo, bringing fresh energy and imagination to a program that continues to grow in impact and spirit each year. 🍀



*A Bold Step Forward*

# Celebrating 70 Years While Building Our Permanent Middle School Home

*St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School is stepping into an exciting new chapter.*



Plans are underway for a permanent Middle School building on Whitehaven Parkway, bringing us closer to a long-held vision: one unified campus, one connected community, from Early Childhood through Grade 8.

For more than two decades, our Middle School students have thrived. As we approach our 25th graduating class, this next step builds on that strong foundation while opening the door to even greater possibilities for teaching, learning, and community life.

At the same time, we are looking ahead to a milestone year. In the year to come, St. Patrick's will celebrate 70 years of joyful learning, enduring community, and mission-driven education. Throughout the year, we look forward to gathering as a community for special events and celebrations that honor our history and the people who have shaped it.

Together, these moments reflect something powerful: a school that honors its past while boldly investing in its future.

Stay tuned! 





Music teachers Betsy Sebring,  
Laura Petersen, and Alicia Knox



*Making Music Together*

## The Orff Approach at St. Patrick's

*Step into a music classroom at St. Patrick's and you may see students clapping rhythmic patterns, moving across the floor in time with a melody, or experimenting with xylophones and drums. You might hear laughter as a group tries out a new musical idea together. What you are witnessing is the Orff approach in action—a way of teaching music that emphasizes creativity, collaboration, and active participation.*

*At St. Patrick's, Music Teachers Alicia Knox, Laura Petersen, and Betsy Sebring guide students through this approach from the earliest grades through middle school, helping them discover not only the joy of music-making but also valuable life skills along the way.*



## MUSIC FOR THE WHOLE CHILD

“The Orff approach is focused on the whole child,” explains Petersen. “It’s about making music as a community.”

Rather than centering on memorizing musical terminology or mastering an instrument alone, Orff-based instruction immerses students in the act of creating music together. In St. Patrick’s classrooms, teachers often refer to the core elements of the approach as “sing, say, move, play, and create.” These elements appear in nearly every lesson.

The process mirrors how children naturally learn. Students first experience music through sound, movement, and rhythm before learning formal notation or vocabulary.

“It’s very experiential,” says Sebring. “Students are immersed in the music and creating it together with their classmates.”

The emphasis is not simply on learning *about* music, but on becoming active music-makers. Every member of the class contributes in a way that suits their abilities and comfort level.

“If you can keep a steady beat while someone else plays a more complex part, that’s great,” Petersen says. “Every member of the ensemble is valued.”

## LEARNING THROUGH EXPLORATION

In practice, the Orff approach begins with the most accessible instrument of all: the body.

Students often start with spoken rhythms and body percussion before moving on to simple handheld percussion instruments. From there, they might explore xylophones, recorders, ukuleles, or guitars as they grow older.

“We are the instrument first,” Petersen explains. “Speech and body percussion come before transferring those rhythms to instruments.”

Even the youngest students participate actively in shaping the music they create.

# Faculty Spotlight

“With three- and four-year-olds, we’re already asking questions,” Petersen says. “What movement should we add here? What word could we substitute in the song?”

Students learn that their ideas matter—and that trying someone else’s idea is equally important.

The classroom environment reflects this flexibility. Music rooms are intentionally open spaces where students can move freely, and instruments are easy to access so children can begin making music right away.

“Students can come in with no prior experience and still be successful immediately,” Sebring says.

## SKILLS THAT EXTEND BEYOND MUSIC

While students are developing musical skills, they are also building something deeper.

“We often say we’re teaching more than the rhythms and the notes,” Petersen says. “We’re teaching the whole child.”

Through music-making, students practice collaboration, communication, and empathy. Many activities require working in pairs, small groups, or as a full ensemble—situations that demand listening, compromise, and shared responsibility.

“Almost everything we do is group work,” Knox says. “And learning how to navigate that is really important.”

Students also develop confidence by sharing ideas and performing for others. From early childhood performances to middle school showcases, St. Patrick’s students have numerous opportunities to perform in front of an audience.

“That kind of experience builds presence and confidence,” Petersen says. “Standing up in front of people becomes something they’re comfortable with.”

The work also requires students to be aware of multiple things at once—their own rhythm, the group’s tempo, and the musical cues around them.

“It’s very layered thinking,” Knox explains. “They’re listening to others while contributing their own part.”

## A SPACE FOR RISK-TAKING AND BELONGING

Music class also becomes a place where students feel safe to try new ideas.

The teachers emphasize that experimentation—even when it doesn’t work perfectly—is part of the process.



“Students learn that you won’t know if something works unless you try it,” Petersen says.

As students grow older, this environment of trust becomes even more important.

“Sharing something you’ve created in front of your peers can feel vulnerable,” Knox says. “We make sure students know this is a respectful and supportive community.”

The sense of belonging that emerges from this shared work is powerful. Students learn that they are contributing to something larger than themselves—an ensemble where every part matters.

“That feeling of being part of something bigger is really meaningful,” Petersen says.

## MUSIC FOR LIFE

Importantly, the goal of Orff-based music education is not to produce professional musicians.

“We’re not trying to train conservatory students,” Petersen says with a smile.

Instead, the teachers hope their students leave St. Patrick’s with a lifelong connection to music.

“I want them to feel that music is something they can do,” Sebring says. “That it belongs to them.”

For some students, that might mean joining a choir or band in high school. For others, it might be singing with their own children someday, joining a community chorus, or simply feeling comfortable participating in music at a celebration.

“We want them to be lifelong music lovers and appreciators,” Petersen says.

### **MOMENTS OF JOY**

For teachers, some of the most rewarding moments come when students take an idea and transform it into something unexpected.

“We often think of it like planting a seed,” Knox says. “You give them an idea, and then they take it somewhere you never imagined.”

Those moments are only possible when teachers step back and allow students to lead.

“The more we can get out of the way, the more successful they become,” Petersen says.



Sometimes success appears in small ways—a student recognizing a musical pattern they learned years earlier, or a group confidently starting a piece without teacher guidance.

Other times it appears on stage, when students perform music they have arranged or created themselves.

“Watching them present something they built together is incredible,” Sebring says.

### **A LASTING IMPACT**

For the St. Patrick’s music faculty, the ultimate measure of success is simple: students leaving school believing that music is part of who they are.

When graduates return years later and recognize a familiar instrument or melody, the teachers know the experience stayed with them.

“They’ll see a xylophone and say, ‘I still remember how to play that,’” Knox says. “Those moments are really special.”

Through singing, movement, collaboration, and creativity, the Orff approach ensures that music at St. Patrick’s is not just a subject students study—it is an experience they share.

And in that shared experience, they learn skills that will resonate far beyond the music room. 🎵



## Artificial Intelligence in the Middle School

# Guiding Students Through a Digital Frontier

JAMILA FELTON, DAY SCHOOL LIBRARIAN

LEAH CORRADI, ACADEMIC DEAN & ASSISTANT HEAD OF MIDDLE SCHOOL

**Can you tell me a little about how AI is being introduced to our middle school students? What does the curriculum look like in practice?**

**Jamila:** Last year in Grade 5 Library, AI would come up passively—students talking about tools like ChatGPT or using Canva AI to make characters. Hearing those conversations made me go to Jen and Leah and say, “I want to start a club where students can learn about artificial intelligence—how it works, how it’s changing, how it’s used every day.” We started talking about that last spring.

**Leah:** For me, it felt like everywhere I turned in education, people were talking about AI. Teachers were worried and needed guidance, and there were a lot of professional development opportunities. I went to an AI conference a couple of springs ago, and while it was interesting and thought-provoking, it didn’t quite feel immediate yet.

Last spring and summer felt different. Jamila and I went to a conference where we were given language and guidelines for building a school policy. I realized teachers needed that language. Even if the answer is “you can’t use it,” we still need to acknowledge it directly. From there, the work evolved.

**Jamila:** No one signed up for my club, which was fine, because we pivoted. We reached out to club advisors and asked if we could come talk to their groups about AI. Then the eighth grade team offered us dedicated time to do AI work.



**Leah:** We realized it would be more powerful to meet students in the context of what they were already doing. In Robotics Club, we talked about AI in relation to their work. In Helping Dogs Club, students used Canva AI to create posters about training service dogs, which led to conversations about prompting and ethics.

In the Sustainability and Community Service Clubs, we looked at AI’s environmental impact—its effects on power grids and water use—and had discussions grounded in students’ interests.

**Jamila:** In Community Service Club, students were researching nonprofits. When you Google now, the first thing you see is an AI overview. We talked about why you can’t rely on that alone—you have to dig deeper.

We also worked with seventh grade science classes on using AI tools to create vocabulary flashcards, focusing on prompting, evaluating responses, and asking for sources. We use MagicSchool, which is a more controlled, school-safe AI environment where we can guide and monitor student use.

**Leah:** All of this is framed as “if you want”—it’s never required. Sometimes the answer is no. Safety and ethics are always part of the conversation.

**Why is it important for middle school students to begin learning about AI now?**

**Jamila:** As a Librarian, I’m an information professional. AI is a tool for accessing information, learning, and communicating. We want students to understand how to use it safely, who created it, and why.

Our students are digital natives. They already have access to powerful technology at school and at home. As educators, we need to equip them with the skills to use it responsibly.

And this is a major shift—it’s like a fourth industrial revolution. Decades from now, we’ll be talking about this moment in the same way.

**Leah:** I was struck by how much fear and negativity surrounded AI. Students were starting to get the message that it’s just “bad.” But this is the world they’re going to live in. It didn’t feel fair to demonize it before helping them understand it.

We’ve seen what happens when we ignore technology—like social media. Students will use it anyway, but without guidance. If we don’t teach them, they won’t know how to use it well, and they’ll enter a world where that knowledge is expected.

I don't think AI needs to be fully integrated into everything they do, but they need enough understanding to make informed decisions about whether and how to use it.

**Jamila:** AI is already part of their daily lives. Even if they're not using ChatGPT, they're using Google Maps, streaming music, storing photos in the cloud.

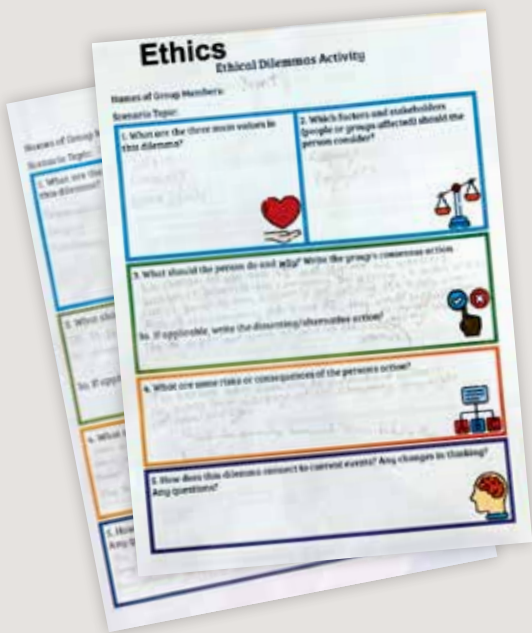
Part of our work is helping them see that full picture. It's not just one tool—it's everywhere. It can be harmful, yes, but it's also incredibly useful. Helping students understand that nuance is important.

**In 2026, AI is increasingly present in everyday life. What skills do you hope students develop by engaging with it in school?**

**Jamila:** We want them to ask questions. To be skeptical.

Why is this tool here? Who created it? Why is it embedded in my apps? Why am I using it—or why am I not allowed to use it? We want them to question what's happening, both socially and academically.

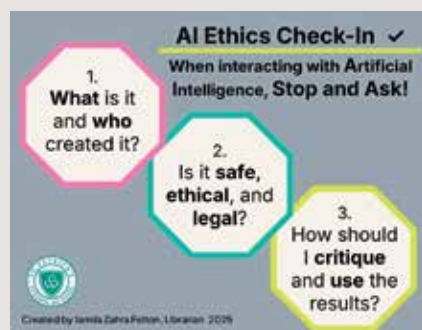
**Leah:** I want them to question AI as they use it—not to assume it's all bad or all good. If they engage with it, are they discerning? Are they reading and evaluating the output?



In my experience, it often takes longer to get a better result from AI because you have to refine and question it. That's what I want for our students. They may not have those skills yet, but we're planting the seeds.

**Jamila:** We also want them to be comfortable talking about it—with peers, with teachers, with parents. Understanding the “who” and the “what” behind these tools is key.

Ultimately, this is the world they're inheriting. They'll be the ones shaping how it's used.



**How do you approach conversations about ethics, responsibility, and critical thinking when using AI tools?**

**Jamila:** We created an “ethics check-in” with three steps:

1. What is it, and who created it?
2. Is it safe, ethical, and legal?
3. How should I critique and use the results?

For many students, the ethical question is where they stop—they have strong feelings about plagiarism or environmental impact. But if they continue, we talk about how to evaluate and refine AI output: not copying and pasting, but questioning, verifying, and improving it.

**Leah:** We also use a tool from the Harvard Graduate School of Education called “The Gradient,” which helps students evaluate scenarios on a scale from “totally fine” to “crosses a line.”

We present gray-area situations and let students debate. The goal is not to tell them what's right or wrong, but to help them think through it.

Teachers are also encouraged to explain *why* AI is or isn't allowed in a given assignment. That reasoning is critical.

**What excites you most about helping students learn to navigate this rapidly changing technological landscape?**

**Leah:** It's fun. The students are passionate, and the topics are fascinating.

Even when they come in skeptical, once you ask for their opinions, they open up. It's empowering to see them reconsider their perspectives and engage in meaningful discussion.

**Jamila:** We use hands-on tools like Google's Quick, Draw! to show how machine learning works, and image-prompting tools to explore how AI interprets inputs. Students get to see how these systems function in real time.

Those experiences—combined with discussions and small-group work—make the learning interactive and engaging.

**How do conversations about AI connect to St. Patrick's mission, particularly around inclusion and understanding?**

**Leah:** Our work is grounded in making sure students feel safe, respected, and heard. We use student feedback to shape what we teach and how we teach it.

**Jamila:** We also talk about representation in AI. For example, when creating an image of a classroom using AI, the first result showed only white students. We had to re-prompt to create a more diverse and representative image.

That helped students see how bias can appear in AI, and how their choices and language can influence outcomes. 🌍

## *Faculty Spotlight*



In April, Early Childhood Division teachers Elizabeth Gambal '06, Iesha Myhand, and Shuyi Peng, recipients of the St. Patrick's Educational Innovation Grant, traveled to Reggio Emilia, Italy for a week-long international study group at the Loris Malaguzzi International Centre, where they deepened their understanding of the Reggio Emilia philosophy through immersive, hands-on learning.



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Faculty and Staff

*At St. Patrick's, faculty and staff growth is central to our mission of providing an exceptional educational experience. This year, our community of educators engaged in a wide array of professional development opportunities, attending conferences, workshops, and training sessions across disciplines to deepen their expertise, collaborate with peers, and bring fresh ideas into the classroom.*

Our educators explored innovative practices in teaching, leadership, and student support, attending both national and regional events. Highlights include:

- **Arts & Music:** Music Teachers Laura Petersen and Alicia Knox attended the American Orff-Schulwerk Association (AOSA) Professional Development Conference, and both also participated in the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) Children's & Community Youth Choir Conductors' Retreat. Music Teacher Betsy Sebring joined the AOSA National Conference, while Art Teachers Stephanie Sack and Sevgi Wallack attended the National Art Education Association (NAEA) Convention in Chicago.
- **Social-Emotional Learning & Leadership:** Grade 1 Homeroom Teacher Annie Miller completed the National Council for the Social Studies Annual Conference and IMSE Phonological Awareness Training. Day School Counselors Julianne Reilly and Debbie Weinberger participated in the Positive Discipline Conference and Think Tank, while Assistant Head of Elementary Grades Shannon Thomas engaged in the Leadership and Design Wonder Women program.
- **Learning Support & Literacy:** Lower School Learning Specialists Chris Heim and Anna Young participated in multiple Institute for Multi-Sensory Education (IMSE) courses, including interventions for struggling readers and

## Faculty Spotlight



fidelity certifications. Grade 3 Learning Specialist Paula Young Shelton attended the IMSE Morphology Plus Course, and Chris Heim also visited regional schools to explore best practices in reading, math, and learning support.

- **Diversity, Equity, and Belonging:** Religion Teacher/Director of Service Learning Kankunda Klingenberg and Director of Lower School Learning Support/Grade 3 Learning Specialist Alana Lewis joined *Roots to Routes: A Call Forward* and associated leadership sessions to cultivate belonging and transformative practices across our community.
- **Administrative & Leadership Growth:** Staff across the administrative and auxiliary teams—including Chris Bolger, Director of Development; Julia Hiemstra, Director of Communications; John Faig, Director of Information Technology; Eby Okonkwo, Director of Auxiliary Programs; and Sam Mason, Head of Lower School—attended national conferences such as the Council for Advancement and Support of Education’s National Association of Independent Schools Annual Conference (CASE-NAIS), the Association of Technology Leaders in Independent Schools Annual Conference (ATLIS), the National Association of Episcopal Schools Annual Conference (NAES), and the National Business Officers Association Annual Conference (NBOA) to strengthen their leadership, technology, and operational expertise.
- **Specialized Workshops:** Educators engaged in niche and cutting-edge trainings, such as Anna Young’s Association of Independent Maryland & DC Schools (AIMS) Learning Specialist Roundtable, Spanish Teacher Fatima Montero’s Task-Based Language Teaching symposium, and Head of Lower School Sam Mason’s Harvard Universal Design for Learning (UDL) program.



- **Library & Media:** Day School Librarian Mara Rosenberg represented St. Patrick’s at the School Library Journal (SLJ) Summit and the American Library Association Annual Conference, bringing insights in youth media, literacy, and library services back to our classrooms.
- **Head of School Professional Development:** HOS Jalene Spain Thomas continued to expand her leadership expertise this year, attending:
  - June 2025 – *The Summit, A Joy-Raising (Fundraising) Experience*, Chicago, IL
  - October 2025 – Elementary School Heads Association (ESHA) Heads Retreat, Newport, RI (Presenter and serving as member of ESHA Executive Council)
  - November 2025 – Mid-Atlantic Episcopal School Association (MAESA) Early Childhood Conference (serving as MAESA Board President), Bethesda, MD
  - November 2025 – The Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington (AISGW) Heads Retreat, Washington, DC
  - April 2026 – The Heads Network/AISGW Inspired Female Leaders Conference, Washington, DC
  - April 2026 – AIMS Annual Heads Conference, Stevensville, MD

Together, our educators continue to pursue excellence, learning from experts across the country and applying new strategies to enrich teaching, learning, and leadership at St. Patrick’s. Their commitment ensures that every student experiences a school environment that is dynamic, inclusive, and forward-thinking. 🌱



## Kate Brady '14

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT MANAGER AT PLUS-PLUS USA

### Can you tell me a little about yourself and your path since graduating from St. Patrick's?

I grew up in Washington, DC and lived in the same house my entire childhood until I left for college at Clemson University. Moving to South Carolina was a big change for me. At first I didn't love it because the pace of life felt much slower than DC, but I eventually grew to really appreciate it.

I studied marketing at Clemson, and like a lot of people, some of my college years were impacted by COVID. I never imagined I would end up working in product design. I actually applied for a social media position at my current company, but during the interview process I mentioned that I was interested in product development. My boss, who is also our CEO, brought me on as a product coordinator. Over time I started building samples for trade shows and helping with different projects. Eventually everything just clicked, and I began designing many of our products.

My interest in product development really started earlier, though. At my high school, we had an entrepreneurship capstone where we worked in teams to invent a product and pitch it "Shark Tank" style in front of about 600 people. It was terrifying, but my team ended up winning. That experience was probably the first moment I realized how much I loved the process of creating something new.

### What excites you most about the work you do today?

Honestly, the most exciting part of my job is seeing the products I've designed in kids' hands. We usually develop products a year or two before they actually launch, so there's a long delay



between designing something and seeing it out in the world.

When a product finally launches and photos start coming in of kids building and creating with it, that's the best feeling. I also manage our company's app, where kids can upload photos of what they've built. Sometimes they're very blurry iPad pictures, but I love seeing them. I might upload a new guide on a Friday and come back Monday to dozens of kids building in their own creative ways.

At the end of the day, what excites me most is knowing the products are sparking imagination and helping kids in different ways, whether it's creative

play, sensory engagement, or simply giving them a fun way to focus and build something.

### What does a typical day look like as a Product Development Manager?

It's actually hard to describe a "typical" day because my role changes constantly, which I love.

Some days I'm focused on designing products, literally building prototypes in my office using all white pieces first so I can focus on structure and shape before thinking about color. Other days I'm working on our app, analyzing data about what kids are building, or conducting consumer research.



Because we're a small company, everyone wears a lot of hats. I lead product development meetings each quarter where we review potential products and decide what will move into production. There's also a lot of logistical work, including creating instructions, coordinating packaging, and managing all the behind-the-scenes details that make a product launch possible.

I also attend events at schools and museums where kids can play with our products. That's one of my favorite parts of the job. I'll watch how kids interact with the toys, where they succeed and where they struggle, and use those insights to improve future designs.

**Is there a product you've worked on that you're especially proud of?**

Yes, definitely a line called Pet Packets, which launched this past January.

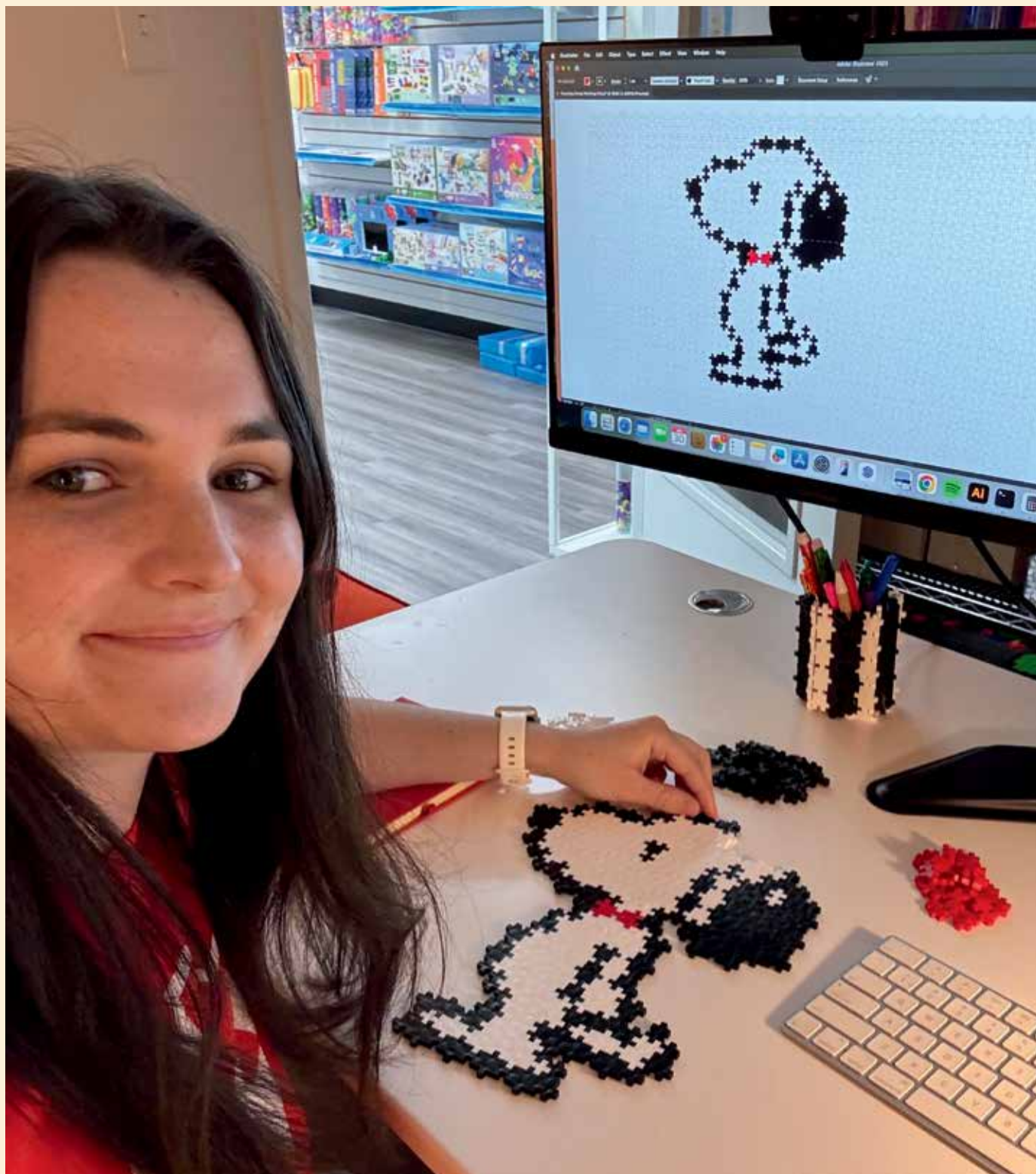
One night I was lying in bed and had the idea of creating really simple builds with big heads and small bodies, something very cute and expressive. There's a huge trend right now around "kawaii" style characters and collectible toys, so I thought it would be fun to create something kids could collect.

*continued on page 40*



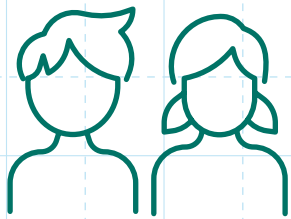
Kate Brady '14 connected with current Kindergarten students via video this spring, sharing insights into her work at Plus-Plus USA as they kicked off their Invention Unit.

“...creativity is a real superpower. Not everyone can think that way. It allows you to innovate, solve problems differently, and create things that didn't exist before.”



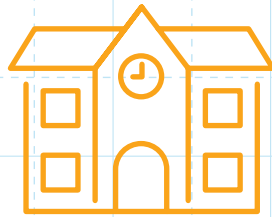
# Our Commitment to the Infinite Value of Every Child

WHAT THAT LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE



**15**

Average class size



**19**

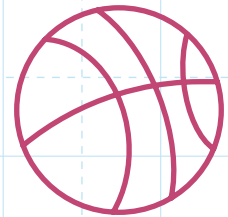
ACRES

Campus grounds



**80%**

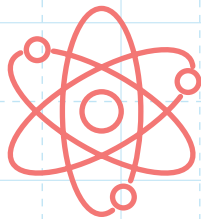
Faculty and academic leaders holding advanced degrees



**17**

TEAMS

Interscholastic athletics programs



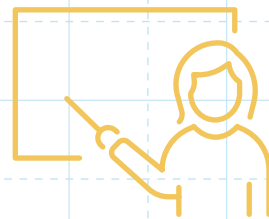
**44%**

Grades 5-8 students enrolled in accelerated coursework



**1,225**  
HOURS/YEAR

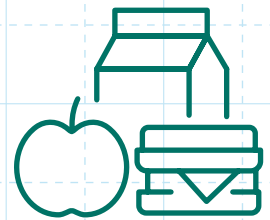
Individual and small-group learning specialist support in K-5 students, focused on acceleration, extension, and individualized growth



**5**

HOURS/WEEK

Faculty-led after-school tutorial time in Middle School



**85**

HOURS/YEAR

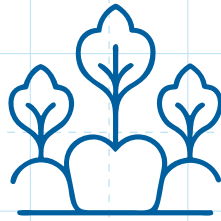
Lunch-bunch counseling groups focused on social skill development in Grades 1-2



**300**

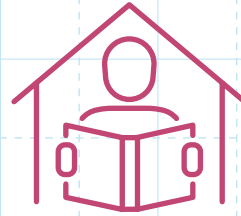
**HOURS/YEAR**

Outdoor, play-based learning for PK students



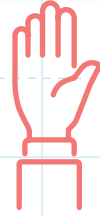
**1**

Urban garden solidifying our status as a US Green Ribbon School



**7:1**

Student-to-faculty ratio



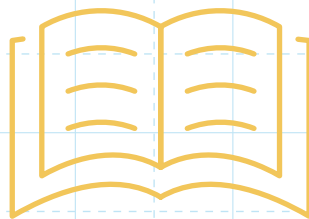
**41%**

Students of color



**1,300+**  
**YEARS**

Combined teaching experience across the Day School



**40**  
**BOOKS**

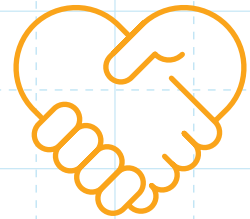
Average number of books read per student over 3 years in Middle School



**64**

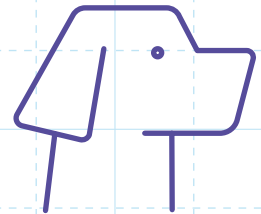
**TIMES ON STAGE**

Average number of opportunities students speak or perform publicly (chapel roles, recitations, concerts, plays, performances, and more!)



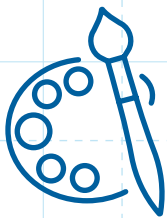
**10+**

Affinity Groups for students, families, and faculty and staff



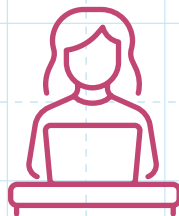
**4**

Service dogs trained by Middle School students to support recovering veterans



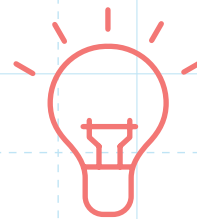
**16+**

Types of fine art media explored by students from Kindergarten through Grade 8



**100%**

Faculty engaged in AI professional development this past year



**100%**

Middle School students engaged in classroom discussions about AI

continued from page 36

The sets feature little animals with personality, like a “tired turtle,” and they even have stickers for expressive eyes, which was a first for us. I love the idea that the characters feel alive and that kids can connect with them emotionally.

Pet Packets started as a simple idea in my Notes app, and seeing them now on store shelves and doing well has been incredibly exciting.

**What skills or mindset are important for someone interested in product development?**

Empathy is a big one. You really have to understand your customers, what they love about a product and what frustrates them. Being able to put yourself in someone else’s shoes is essential.

Creative thinking and problem solving are also huge. You’re constantly iterating, adjusting designs, incorporating feedback from customers or colleagues, and improving things along the way.

It’s also a very collaborative role. I work closely with designers, sales teams, and colleagues overseas in Denmark, so communication and openness to other people’s ideas are really important.

**Looking back, what are some of your favorite memories from St. Patrick’s?**

It’s honestly hard to pick just a few. I always credit St. Patrick’s with shaping the kind of person I am today.

The sense of community was really strong. Weekly chapel and the school culture emphasized empathy, kindness, and considering other people’s perspectives. I think that’s where a lot of my empathy developed.

I also loved the small class sizes and the opportunities that came with them. For example, in eighth grade we learned to play guitar, something that might not have happened at a larger school. St. Patrick’s gave us the

freedom to explore creatively and try many different things.

**Were there teachers who had a lasting impact on you?**

Definitely. Mrs. [Mary Beth] James (Grade 1) and Mrs. [Jan] Nelson (Grade 2) had a huge influence on me when I was younger.

I was a very shy and anxious kid, and Mrs. James would send me home with a journal so I could write to her about my day. That allowed us to build a relationship even when I felt too nervous to speak up in class.

By the time I was in Mrs. Nelson’s class the next year, she really helped bring me out of my shell and encouraged me to be myself.

I also remember Ms. [Judy] Barr being such an incredible presence in the middle school community. There were so many teachers who made an impact; it’s hard to name them all.

**What advice would you give to current St. Patrick’s students?**

I would tell them that creativity is incredibly valuable—and that you can absolutely build a career around it.

When you’re younger, intelligence is often measured by how well you do in subjects like math or science. I used to feel self-conscious because my brother excelled in those areas while I leaned more toward creative thinking.

But as I got older, I realized that creativity is a real superpower. Not everyone can think that way. It allows you to innovate, solve problems differently, and create things that didn’t exist before.

So I would tell students that creativity isn’t a wasted skill, but rather something to embrace. You never know where it might take you! 🍀



**John Thomas**  
**'23**

John Thomas '23, a current Sidwell student, spent his junior year completing the School Year Abroad program based in Zaragoza, Spain. He lived with a host family and took four of six classes in Spanish. One course included experiential field work to monasteries, castles, mines, orchards, and vineyards. He explored Spain’s various cultures, such as the Basque region and Galicia. He grew more self-sufficient through organizing and executing independent travel plans to places such as Pamplona, Tarragona, and Lleida. Another highlight was immersing with the local community by joining a choir to sing musical theatre songs in Spanish. John attributes his passion for international travel to the summer 2022 St. Patrick’s trip to Iceland! 🍀



# Annual Fund

2025-2026



AT THE DAY SCHOOL, 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.

INFINITE VALUE,  
INFINITE PROMISE



TO GIVE OR PLEDGE TO THE 2025-2026 ANNUAL FUND NOW, please visit our website at [www.stpatsdc.org/donate](http://www.stpatsdc.org/donate) or scan the QR code before June 30.


HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Please contact Anthony J. Cerra, Director of Annual Giving, at (202) 342-7012 or [cerra@stpatsdc.org](mailto:cerra@stpatsdc.org).



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 St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School

### SAVE THE DATES

**Thursday, July 23**

Popsicles on the Playground  
(All Families Welcome!)

**Wednesday, September 2**

New Parent Dinner

**Tuesday, September 8**

School Opening for PK3-Grade 8

**Friday, September 11**

Opening Chapel for Students & Parents  
(Kindergarten-Grade 8)

**Thursday, September 24**

Opening Chapel for Students & Parents  
(PK3/PK4)



### *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.