

*Moving Forward*



SISTERS  
ACADEMY

*of* BALTIMORE

ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015

# Letter from the President & Board Chair

We dedicate this annual report to Sister Mary Lou Monaghan, SNDdeN, who went home to God on December 3, 2014. Months before we opened in 2004, Sister Mary Lou called and asked how she could help. And so, she became our art teacher using donated supplies, materials, and furnishings in a corner of our gym. Over the years with Sister Mary Lou and Beth Wood, our art program has become one of the hallmarks of Sisters Academy. Each year, Sister Mary Lou's 8th grade students gave a gift that they created in art class. And so, the work of her hands is with us throughout the school – the painted stairs, the artistic rendition of Psalm 148, the mural in the courtyard, and the butterflies. Now Sister Mary Lou is with the Good God, and we know in faith that our whole community of Sisters Academy is with her. May she rest now in the peace of God.

Like Sister Mary Lou, many of you have asked how you can help, and you have responded generously by becoming scholarship sponsors, donors, volunteers, event sponsors, and participants. The accomplishments of this past year at Sisters Academy would not have been possible without your extraordinary generosity.

During our self-study, the process of reflection on the experience of our mission and vision was a wonderful way to mark the completion of ten years. In identifying the strengths and weaknesses of our educational program, we developed a plan for our second decade, **Moving the Mission Forward**. On May 14, 2015, we received the good news that we had been accredited through 2025. We are grateful to Sister Virginia Marie Brune, SSND for her leadership during the accreditation process and for the dedication of our faculty, staff, and Board of Directors.

Under the leadership of an extraordinary event committee, we held our major fundraiser, **Downtown Hoedown: Raisin' a Ruckus for Sisters Academy**, on April 25, 2015. Two years in the making, the event exceeded our expectations. Dr. Regina Benjamin received the first Shining Star Award. Her words inspired all of us as she said, "We should all lead from behind and push these young women to be the very best that they can be." We are most grateful to Dr. Benjamin, our event committee, our honorary committee, our event sponsors, and all of our guests.

At the end of the school year, we marked a significant transition in leadership as Sister Debbie Liesen, SSND, our founding principal, concluded her service. For eleven years, Sister Debbie created the spirit and tone in the school. Day by day, she brought vision, discipline, faith, and courage to her work. Leading by example, she brought the mission to life. Over the years, she kept moving the mission forward by evoking the best from our students, faculty, and parents. With Sister Debbie's leadership, Sisters Academy has had the best possible foundation and we are filled with gratitude.

As you read our report, we hope that you will see in each picture the joy of learning; in each name, the joy of giving; and in each report, the joy of moving forward. Thank you!

Siempre Adelante! Keep moving forward!

Sister Delia Dowling, SSND

Sister Delia Dowling, SSND  
President



Margaret O. Moseley

Margaret O. Moseley  
Chair, Board of Directors



# Students Moving Forward

## Student Accomplishments

- ✓ Students who graduated in June 2015 are now attending Cristo Rey Jesuit High School, Institute of Notre Dame, Patapsco High School, and The Seton Keough High School.
- ✓ Kafui Anthony, Class of 2012, was one of four students selected for participation in the Counselors' Conference of the Career and Technology Education for Project Lead the Way (PLTW). Kafui shared what she had learned about engineering through her experience with PLTW at Baltimore Polytechnic Institute.
- ✓ Tamauri Beasley, Grade 7, was honored by Center Stage for her entry in the 2015 Young Playwrights Festival. The festival is a yearly competition that invites student playwrights throughout Maryland to submit their original works. Her play, *We're Both Strong*, was performed during an in-school reading by Center Stage actors.
- ✓ Students in all grades were actively engaged in a new year-long character education curriculum. Last year's theme was "Great Attitudes, Great Results." Each class discussed and identified an attitude for their focus during the year. Brooke Winter, life skills teacher and school counselor, introduced a new "word of the month" for a school-wide focus.

## Program Highlights

- ✓ The "Lunch Bunch," a group of ten employees of Bon Secours Health System, came to the school once a month and met with a particular student over lunch. Through their relationships with the women of the Lunch Bunch, students gained confidence, developed social skills, and received encouragement.
- ✓ The Institute for Integrative Health worked closely with the eighth grade class on a series of mindfulness activities. Students appreciated their experiences with breathing techniques, walking meditation, nutrition and healthy eating, and step-dancing.
- ✓ The seventh and eighth grade classes visited the U.S. Capitol for a tour and "meet and greet" with Senator Timothy Scott (R-SC). The eighth grade class also went on a tour of the White House.
- ✓ The Christ Child Society continued their partnership with Sisters Academy and hosted a tea party for the entire school community in celebration of our tenth anniversary. The group served finger foods, desserts, and assorted teas to the students and staff, and gave each attendee a hand-knitted scarf.



# Moving the Mission Forward: The Strategic Plan for Improvement

The Strategic Plan for Improvement guides the growth of Sisters Academy during its second decade. This plan grew from the school's self-study and the commendations and recommendations of the collegial visiting team of the Association of Independent Maryland and DC Schools (AIMS). The plan identifies goals and specifies certain actions to achieve the goals, always in alignment with the school's mission and vision. The plan involves all stakeholders, including students, faculty and staff, graduates, parents, board members, sponsors, donors, the sponsoring religious communities, and other friends.

Sisters Academy will move the mission forward by focusing on the empowerment of its students, graduates, and the community to become agents of transformation in their families, communities, and society. The second decade will continue to be guided by four strategic directions: offering an innovative and challenging curriculum; expanding communications and engagement; strengthening enrollment management; and ensuring sustainability.

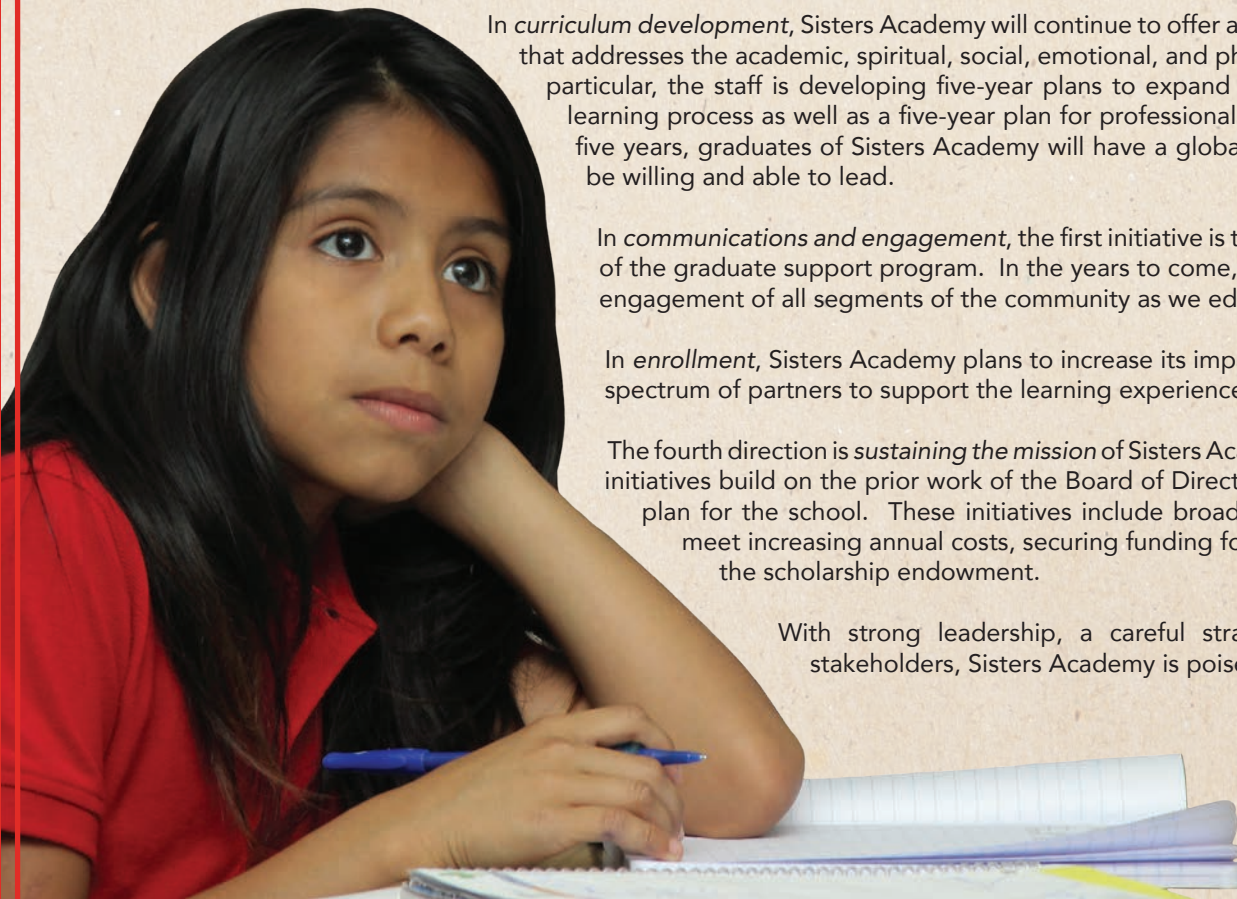
In *curriculum development*, Sisters Academy will continue to offer an innovative and challenging curriculum that addresses the academic, spiritual, social, emotional, and physical development of the students. In particular, the staff is developing five-year plans to expand the integration of technology into the learning process as well as a five-year plan for professional development. The staff hopes that, in five years, graduates of Sisters Academy will have a global perspective, be service-oriented, and be willing and able to lead.

In *communications and engagement*, the first initiative is the thoughtful growth and development of the graduate support program. In the years to come, Sisters Academy plans to heighten the engagement of all segments of the community as we educate students for the next generation.

In *enrollment*, Sisters Academy plans to increase its impact through the involvement of a broad spectrum of partners to support the learning experiences of students and graduates.

The fourth direction is *sustaining the mission* of Sisters Academy into the future. The sustainability initiatives build on the prior work of the Board of Directors that developed a five-year financial plan for the school. These initiatives include broadening our base of financial support to meet increasing annual costs, securing funding for capital improvements, and increasing the scholarship endowment.

With strong leadership, a careful strategic plan, and the involvement of stakeholders, Sisters Academy is poised for a successful second decade.



# *Moving Forward from Idea to Reality: The Downtown Hoedown Committee Chairs*

What could motivate three dynamic women to drop everything and focus on a single cause? The mission of Sisters Academy to educate motivated young women in a supportive and safe environment, challenge girls to be the best they can be, and prepare them for high school and beyond was reason enough for Maris St. Cyr, Pam Himmelrich, and Anne-Stuart Darrell to “step up to the plate.” This trio came together at the behest of Sisters Academy President, Sister Delia Dowling, and Board member, Sister Augusta Reilly, to co-chair our 10th Anniversary celebration, **Downtown Hoedown: Raisin’ a Ruckus for Sisters Academy**. After assembling a dream team of seventeen other extraordinary women, Maris, Pam, and Anne-Stuart worked enthusiastically for two years to create a fabulous party that would showcase Sisters Academy, its important mission, and remarkable students and faculty.

Over 500 guests and supporters joined students, faculty, staff, and Board members to celebrate this milestone. The objectives for the Hoedown were four-fold: to celebrate our first decade of educating young women, to thank faithful supporters, to increase the school’s visibility in the community, and to raise funds for the scholarship endowment and other needs.

Maris, who honed her skills at the Maryland Science Center, Marian House, and the National Aquarium, led a creative production team that developed the Hoedown theme and brought it to reality. From entertainment to décor to activities to mouth-watering barbeque, Maris’ committee orchestrated an unforgettable evening.

Meanwhile, Pam and Anne-Stuart, community volunteers and Sisters Academy Board members, and old friends for over 30 years, joined forces to raise sponsorship money for the Hoedown. Together they wrote countless letters, made numerous phone calls, and explained the critical mission of Sisters Academy. They reconnected with loyal supporters and cultivated new friends who found the school’s purpose and record of success to be compelling. Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of many individuals, businesses, and foundations, the Hoedown costs were covered and \$218,000 was raised for the school.

Maris, Anne-Stuart, and Pam say that their efforts, while considerable, were no more than every other member of the Hoedown Committee. Each enthusiastic volunteer brought her special skills, expertise, connections, and great attitude to the project.

Sisters Academy is grateful to Maris, Anne-Stuart, and Pam, the Downtown Hoedown Anniversary Committee, and all the other volunteers who help the school successfully fulfill its mission.



# Student Scholarship Sponsors 2014-2015

Sisters Academy is grateful to the following individuals, religious communities, businesses, and foundations that have chosen to make a multi-year commitment to sponsor a student for four years.

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# Moving Forward to High School and College

As we entered the 2014-2015 academic year, seven classes of 8th graders had graduated from Sisters Academy of Baltimore. By June 2015, all of these young women completed a minimum of a year of high school or graduated from high school. One hundred percent (100%) of the graduates from the past four years (2011 through 2014) attended high school. Ninety-two percent (92%) of these graduates are attending or have graduated from a private, Catholic, or selective public high school with a college-preparatory curriculum. The high schools our graduates attended during 2014-2015 include:

Archbishop Spalding High School  
Baltimore City College High School  
Baltimore Polytechnic Institute  
The Catholic High School of Baltimore  
Cristo Rey Jesuit High School  
Excel Academy at Francis W. Wood High School  
Friends School of Baltimore  
George Washington Carver Center for Arts and Technology  
Institute of Notre Dame  
Maryvale Preparatory School  
Mount de Sales Academy  
New Era Academy  
Paul Laurence Dunbar High School  
The Seton Keough High School  
Western High School

As of June 2015, one hundred percent (100%) of the graduates from our first four classes (2008 through 2011) earned a high school diploma. Eighty-six percent (86%) of these high school grads are currently enrolled in a two or four-year college. The colleges include:

Anne Arundel Community College (MD)  
Bowie State University (MD)  
Community College of Baltimore County (MD)  
Goucher College (MD)  
Frostburg State University (MD)  
Morgan State University (MD)  
Notre Dame of Maryland University (MD)  
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Salem College (NC)  
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St. John's University (NY)  
St. Lawrence University (NY)  
The College of Wooster (OH)  
St. Joseph's University (PA)  
Wheeling Jesuit University (WV)

Photo courtesy of  
Sharon Redmond



# Donors 2014-2015

We would like to thank everyone who has shared in the ministry of Sisters Academy of Baltimore by donating generously to the Annual Appeal, in volunteer hours, and with other gifts and services in support of our students' education.

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*"We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing  
new things, because we're curious and curiosity keeps leading  
us down new paths."*

~ Walt Disney

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*"If you can't fly, then run. If you can't run, then walk. If you can't walk, then crawl. But whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward."*

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

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*The photos to the right are from the  
 Downtown Hoedown event. In the  
 middle photo, Dr. Regina Benjamin,  
 our honored guest, poses with two  
 of our student hoedown dancers.*

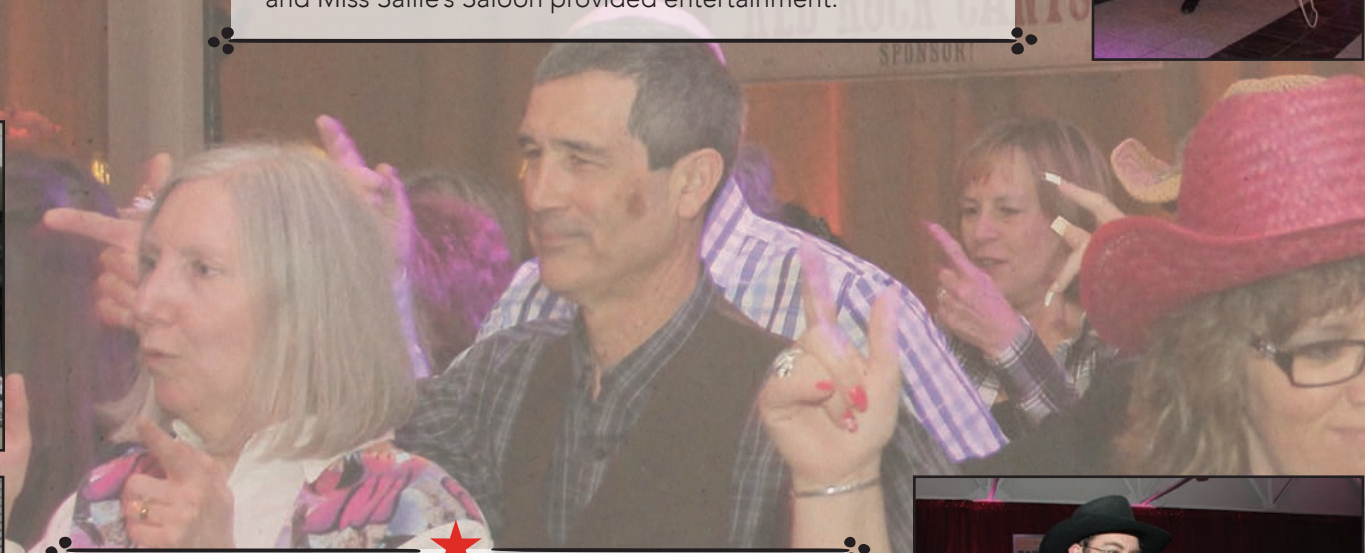


# DOWNTOWN HOEDOWN



## AN EVENING TO REMEMBER

Over 500 guests kicked up their heels and moseyed on down to Montgomery Park in Baltimore City for the Downtown Hoedown on Saturday, April 25, 2015. The highlight was the presentation of the first Shining Star Award to Dr. Regina Benjamin, 18th Surgeon General of the United States. Miss Babs and the Kickin' Boogie Band, Trick Roper Chris McDaniel, and Miss Sallie's Saloon provided entertainment.



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– 18th US Surgeon General

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*"How nice it is to feel that our school, or the places where we gather, are a second home. This is not only important for you, but also for your families. School then ends up being one big family. A family where, together with our mothers and fathers, our grandparents, our teachers and friends, we learn to help one another, to share our good qualities, to give the best of ourselves, to work as a team, for that is very important, and to pursue our dreams."*

~ Pope Francis

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*"Our duty, as men and women, is to proceed as if limits to our ability did not exist. We are collaborators in creation."*

~ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

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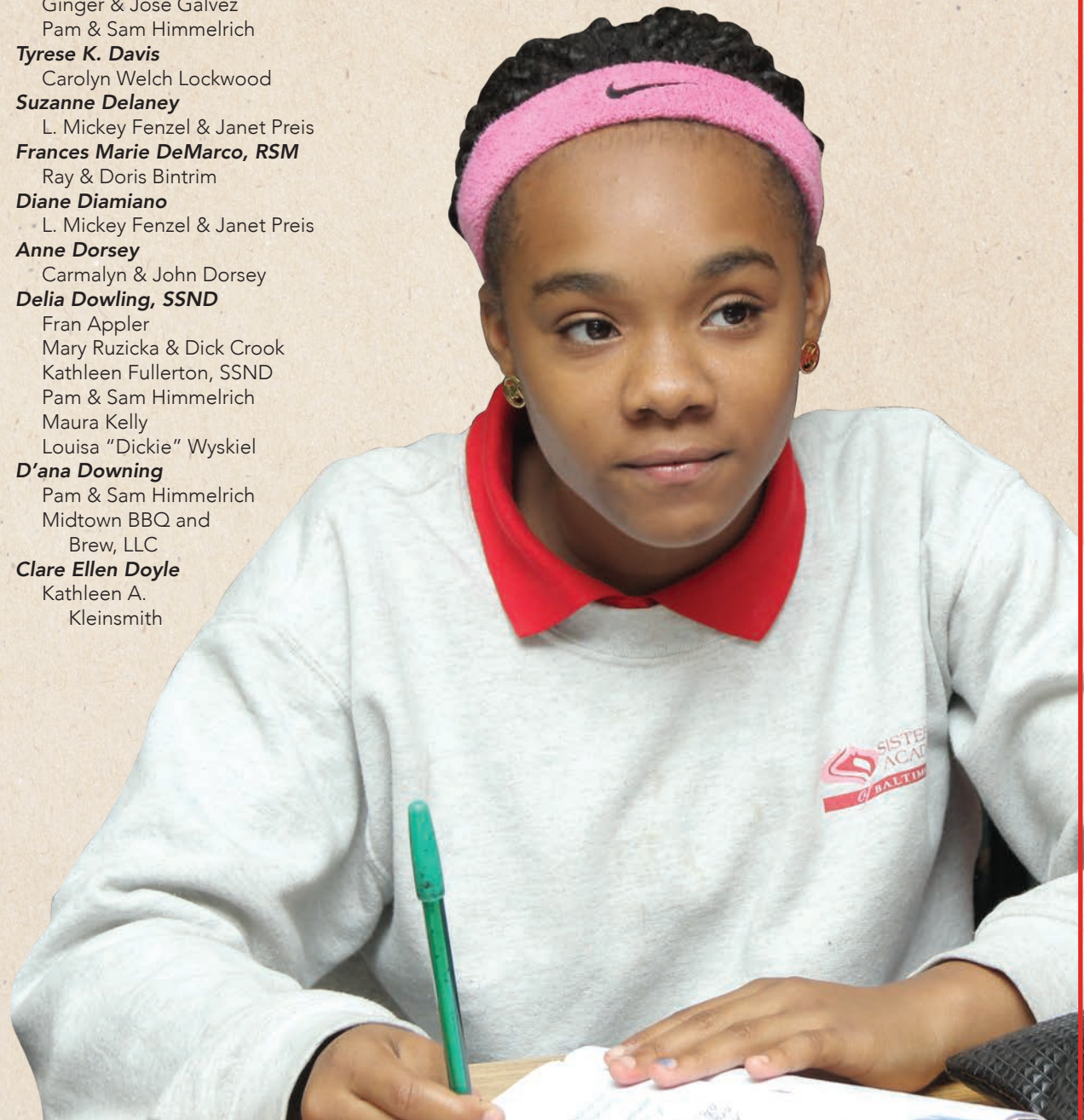
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*"Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world."*

~ Harriet Tubman

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*"Sisters Academy has impacted my family by allowing me to provide an education for my daughter that I would have never dreamed possible. My daughter is getting smarter, more responsible, and her confidence level has definitely increased."*

~ 6th Grade Parent

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*Sisters Academy of Baltimore is exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All contributions to the Academy are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. Every effort has been made to accurately list all Sisters Academy contributors and volunteers for the period of July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015. We apologize for any errors. Please contact the school at 410-242-1212 with any corrections. Thank you for your continued support.*



# Moving Forward Every Day - A Day in the Life of a 6th Grade Girl



*Morning*

- 7:30 AM Students arrive for breakfast.
- 7:45 AM Students line up and proceed to homeroom where they check in with their teacher and organize their materials for morning classes.
- 8:00 AM All students and faculty assemble in Gathering Space for prayer, announcements, sharing of ideas, and celebrations of birthdays and other student accomplishments.
- 8:15 AM Vocabulary
- 9:00 AM Art (MTh)/Computer Technology (TF)  
Life Skills (W)
- 9:45 AM Mathematics
- 10:30 AM Social Studies
- 11:15 AM Science
- 12:00 PM Lunch and recess



Photo courtesy of Syranno



*Afternoon*

- 12:45 PM Music (MW)/Physical Education (TTh)  
Life Skills (F)
- 1:30 PM Language Arts
- 2:15 PM Literature
- 3:00 PM Religion
- 3:45 PM All students complete chores (vacuuming, sweeping, mopping, and cleaning classrooms) throughout the school building and then enjoy a healthy afternoon snack.
- 4:00 PM Students attend Star Review where they begin their homework in a quiet and supportive environment. Teachers are available for extra help. Twice per week, students may participate in team sports.
- 4:45 PM All students organize their materials for afternoon departure and assemble in the gym to be picked up by their parents or to ride the bus home.

*"Sisters Academy builds you up and  
prepares you for life."*

~ 6th Grader

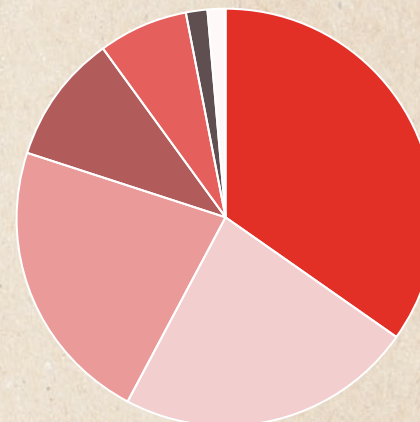
# Financial Summary 2014-2015

Sisters Academy of Baltimore is committed to responsible stewardship of all donations received. During 2014-2015, our financial requirements continued to increase as we expanded our instructional program. Our benefactors responded generously through the student scholarship program, the class sponsor program, annual giving, and our "Downtown Hoedown" major fundraiser.

## Operating Income 2014-2015

Students & Class Sponsors	\$474,686	■ (35.0%)
Annual Giving	\$311,085	■ (22.9%)
Major Fundraiser	\$302,470	■ (22.3%)
Grants	\$135,603	■ (10.0%)
Sponsoring Congregations	\$95,000	■ (7.0%)
Family Fees	\$21,464	■ (1.6%)
Rentals, Events & Investments	\$17,550	□ (1.3%)

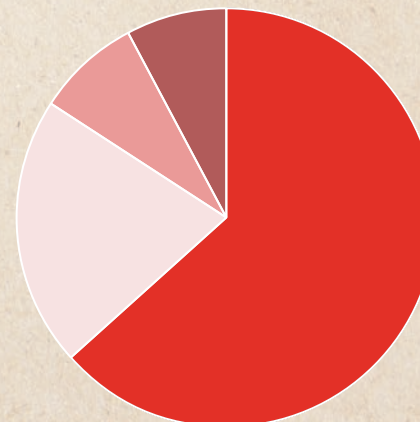
**Total Income** **\$1,357,858**



## Operating Expenses 2014-2015

Instructional	\$735,997	■ (63.3%)
Development	\$239,486	■ (20.7%)
Facilities & Maintenance	\$92,464	■ (8.0%)
Administration	\$89,066	■ (7.7%)

**Total Expenses** **\$1,157,013**



These figures do not include capital income/expenses, donated goods/services, depreciation, or endowment revenue, which are included in our audited financial report. For a copy of our most recent audit, please refer to our website, [www.sistersacademy.org](http://www.sistersacademy.org), under News & Media.

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# *Our Mission*

***Sisters Academy of Baltimore, a Catholic, community-centered middle school, educates girls of different races, ethnic groups, and religions, from families of limited economic means, particularly those in southwest Baltimore. The Academy empowers its students to become agents of transformation in their families, communities, and society.***

"We thank you, not only for your support of the young women entrusted to our care. We thank you especially because you enable us, the sponsors of Sisters Academy, to fulfill our respective missions to raise up women who will heal, transform and influence our world to make it a better place – women whose lives will truly reflect the goodness of God. And for this gift, we are very grateful."

– Patricia Smith, RSM  
Chair, Board Members of Sisters Academy  
Donor Appreciation Reception, April 19, 2012

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Sisters Academy of Baltimore is a full member of the Association of Independent Maryland and DC Schools (AIMS) and is accredited by that organization.

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