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Carrying Our Gifts



The students of the Class of 2026, our 19th fifth-grade class, pose for their class picture.

We carry our gifts on the wings of grace is the theme for 2022-2023, our 19th school year.

Dr. Jeanne Dolamore, Principal, recently reflected on the theme in her weekly message to our families, saying, 'The classrooms, gathering spaces, and even stairwells have been filled with the smiles of contented students reuniting. Whether meeting their big sisters and little sisters, attending classes and ExCEL activities, or learning about the Pledge of Non-Violence, the students and teachers have re-engaged in learning with a delightful energy that sparks our collective desire to learn and grow.'

We held the investiture and Blessing of new students on September 30 in a spirited ceremony in St. Clement Church. The returning 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students welcomed their new sisters through the gifts of advice, cards, and dance. Each new student received her stole in recognition of the gifts she brings to the school each day. As the ceremony ended, 5th grader Brielle responded, 'I love how everyone in the school is so caring and uplifting. It's a blessing to be able to attend this school. I look forward to the rest of my years here!'

This year, we welcomed several teachers new to the school: Emilia Meyer, Life Skills and Spanish Language Arts; Colleen McDowell, 8th grade Language Arts and Literature; Elizabeth Neick, Social Studies; Jeanne Windsor, 5th grade Mathematics; and Aliyah Williams, Physical Education. We also welcomed Kia Fortson, Director of Graduate Support and Karla Cameron and Stephanie Moore who share the position of School Nurse.

We welcomed several friends of the school who are now bringing their gifts in new ways as members of the Board of Directors. They are: Rebecca Brower, Rosann Catalano, Ardrena Allen Gulmert, Susan Gdovin, Maureen Kalil, Kim Moody, and Jean Rittermann.

Sisters Academy succeeds in its mission of educating girls, empowering young women, and transforming lives because of the gifts of all of the members of our community: students, parents, staff, volunteers, donors, scholarship sponsors, foundations, Board of Directors, and the sponsoring congregations. Sisters Academy is truly a gifted community.

Every person matters. Every gift matters. Thank you.

Sister Delia Dowling, SSND

- Sister Delia Dowling, SSND, President

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.

News Notes *News Notes* News Notes *News Notes* News Notes

Poetry Residency

Sisters Academy welcomed Mecca "MeccaMorphosis" Verdell, an up-and-coming young poet in Baltimore, for a week-long poetry residency. The



residency provided students of all grade levels the opportunity to experience a new form of art. Students applied newly-learned writing processes to express feelings and thoughts in words to create original poems. As the week came to an end, the students finished composing their poems and they were invited to share in an open-mic forum. Encouraged by their peers, students from all grade levels stepped up to the microphone and shared their struggles, talents, messages, and culture in poetic form.

Operation TEACH

Sisters Academy employs two young teachers through Operation TEACH, a joint program through Notre Dame of Maryland University and the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Alison Johnson, music teacher, is in her second year in the program, and Elizabeth Neick, social studies teacher, is in her first year. Operation TEACH (Teachers Enlisted to Advance Catholic Heritage) develops a cadre of recent college graduates who are preparing for teaching positions in Catholic schools. They commit to completing a master's degree in education while being employed and mentored in a Catholic school and living together in modest community settings. The young teachers receive support and encouragement from their Notre Dame faculty members, their mentors at school, the school administration, and one another as they share meals, household tasks, service, and spirituality.

College Prep Seminar

During the first week of August, Sisters Academy hosted a college prep seminar for graduates who were entering their junior or senior years of high school. The purpose of the seminar was to help the graduates identify their aspirations, interests, and skills as they consider the

choice of a college; to learn about the application process for college and for financial aid; and to consider the student's financial obligations while at college and beyond. Representatives from area colleges, including Loyola University Maryland, Stevenson University, Notre Dame of Maryland University, Delaware State University, Bowie State University, McDaniel College, University of Maryland, and University of Baltimore participated in the sessions and stimulated discussion and questions. As the week came to a close, five SAB graduates who are now in college shared their experiences of



Two of the SAB graduates on the panel

academic and college life with the high school participants. The high school students enjoyed being together again and exploring their college options.

Spotlight on a Graduate

Destiny Shepard, Class of 2019, recently returned to give the graduate reflections at the annual Blessing and Investiture of New Students. Ms. Gabrielle Hurley, Assistant Principal, introduced Destiny and reminisced about her time at Sisters Academy. She remembered Destiny's big smile and that she could often be found jumping around in the gym as she cheered on the basketball team. The faculty also recalled that Destiny faced challenging moments and learned hard lessons but persisted through her middle school journey. Approaching the podium with poise and grace, Destiny shared her story and offered words of advice to the students.

Destiny reported that Sisters Academy prepared her so well academically for Cristo Rey Jesuit High School that she has maintained a 3.8 GPA. She is a member of the National Honor Society, and is Captain of the Cheer Squad. Destiny's academic and leadership successes have led to numerous opportunities in Cristo Rey's Corporate Internship Program. She interned at

Mount Washington Pediatric Hospital, Mercy Medical Center, and Blakehurst Senior Living Community over the last three years to gain knowledge and experience in the workforce. Currently, Destiny is interning with Atapco Properties, maintaining a part-time job, filling out college applications, and planning the next step in her academic journey. Destiny ended her reflections by saying, "My parting word to you today is to stop and enjoy each and every day because I promise you it will fly by. The next thing you know you will be standing where I am now, and talking to the next generation."



Outward Bound: Positivity through Teamwork for Students, Faculty, and Staff



Eighth-graders enjoyed a brief "cool-off" before continuing down the Potomac River.

Through a grant provided by the Knott Foundation, Outward Bound continues to partner with Sisters Academy to provide students, faculty, and staff with

that they are stronger than they ever imagined individually and that they can accomplish much more when they work together.



Each student carried camping gear and necessities on this outdoor adventure.

outdoor adventures. This summer, ten 8th grade students and one faculty member completed a 5-day expedition that included canoeing 20 miles of the Potomac, camping in tents, cooking backcountry food, reading maps, and navigating through the wilderness. Each outdoor skill taught the students self-sufficiency, courage, perseverance, integrity, leadership, and teamwork. All students finished the trip understanding

Knowing the positive impact that Outward Bound programs have on our students, our faculty and staff decided to join in on the fun by embracing a day full of team bonding experiences. Joined by Outward Bound team leaders, our faculty and staff split into two groups to solve problems, participate in trust activities, and conquer the infamous ropes course together. The activities that Outward Bound provided enhanced communication, problem-

solving skills, reliance, motivation, empowerment, and synergy among the group members. The faculty and staff left the premises knowing that all share joy in teamwork and in achieving our common goals.

As Sisters Academy welcomes fall, additional Outward Bound experiences await our 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students.



Faculty needed teamwork for this exercise.

These new experiences will provide an opportunity for personal growth and strengthen the bonds of sisterhood.




Everyone got to don a hard helmet for the various individual and teamwork exercises.

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Meet Our “Can Do” Liz



Originally from New York with twenty years of teaching experience, Elizabeth (Liz) Nash cannot help smiling when asked, “What do you enjoy most about teaching at Sisters Academy of Baltimore?” “The girls,” was her quick response. “Middle school is a tough time for all children because there are so many social and emotional changes going on. Plus, academically, the mantra of many girls is ‘I can’t.’”

Mrs. Nash is not an “I can’t” kind of person. A mom of a 20-year-old son and a 16-year-old daughter, and wife to a

Navy veteran, Mrs. Nash honed her flexibility by teaching in a variety of school settings in Prince George’s, Howard, and Anne Arundel Counties in Maryland as well as on the military base in Rota, Spain.

“Many of the girls have low confidence, and they construct a wall to hide behind. With Sisters Academy’s small classes, I can really get to know them. I want them to succeed, to discover their worth, see their value and gain their voice,” said Mrs. Nash. “I love, love, love to see an ‘aha’ moment spread across the face of one of my students. You know—the moment when a girl suddenly realizes that she does indeed understand. Her eyes light up and a smile spreads across her face. I live for that!”

“My colleagues are all so invested in ensuring the success of our students. They are the most dedicated faculty with whom I’ve ever worked. We are all very supportive of each other,” said Mrs. Nash.

Charitable Giving

Fall marks the time for many organizations to hold charitable giving campaigns in the workplace. Please remember **Sisters Academy of Baltimore** as you make your pledges for the coming year.

- **United Way**—Sisters Academy of Baltimore is a write-in designee.
- **Maryland Charity Campaign—#341975939**
- **Combined Charity Campaign for Baltimore City—#2746**
- **Giant Food** is continuing its **A+ School Rewards** program. **New supporters** need to register your **GIANT** card and designate Sisters Academy of Baltimore (**School ID #04638**). Register online at www.giantfood.com/aplus or call 1-877-275-2758.
- **Harris Teeter** offers a similar program “**Together in Education**.” To enroll, simply tell the cashier at checkout that you want your **VIC** card linked to Sisters Academy of Baltimore’s account number (**1837**).
- **Weis Markets** offers its “**Weis 4 School Rewards**” program. To enroll, visit weis4school.com and link your **Weis Preferred Shoppers** card to Sisters Academy of Baltimore (**School ID #86699**).
- Don’t forget to save, scan, and/or send in your “**Box Tops for Education**.”
- **Amazon Smile**—Start your holiday shopping at www.amazon Smile.com and designate Sisters Academy as your beneficiary at no cost to you.