

Canticle

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Saint David's School

Fall 2024

Seventh Graders Conduct New Marine Research!

By Devin Schultz '26

It's a sunny fall afternoon in October when 30 seventh-grade boys hike to New York Harbor. They carry glass turbidity tubes, foldable buckets, and chemical test kits. In a few moments, they will be busy sampling water to test its salinity, dissolved oxygen, temperature, and nitrate levels to discover if oysters can thrive in New York Harbor. Their research is part of Saint David's seventh-grade science curriculum and The

Billion Oyster Project, which aims to add 1 billion oysters to the New York Harbor with the help of students, parents, and volunteers.

Science teacher Mr. Sam Woolford brought the program to Saint David's because it allows students to work on real-world environmental issues that challenge scientists.

"Oysters are natural filters, eating algae and dirt, and then pumping out clean water. Many oysters also form habitats, which protect aquatic life from storms. They are vital to the health of New York Harbor," Woolford said. "In the 1600s, which was considered the prime for oysters, the water was much cleaner than the New York Harbor today due to the large amounts of oysters. But they were over-harvested, removing the natural filter from our harbor. That's why we are involved in this project to bring them back."

Lucas Chung, part of this year's team of student-scientists, called the program "an enriching experience. It helped us understand the process needed to keep the New York Harbor healthy."

By the time the boys finished their research in November, they had discovered the biodiversity of other creatures cohabitating in the oyster cages. One day they found a sea horse living among the oysters. Students immediately named him Tyrone and asked if he could return to Saint David's.



(Above and top) Grade 7 studying oysters

News

Thanksgiving Food Drive

By Jack Janus '25

Fifty-seven years ago, in 1967, Assistant Headmaster Mr. Malachy Cleary began one of Saint David's longest-standing traditions: the Thanksgiving Food Drive.

Since then, Saint David's students have donated over 4,500 boxes of canned goods and groceries, and 8,000 boxes of food throughout the entire history of the drive, according to estimates by Mr. Thomas Ryan, who has organized the drive for many years. The eighth grade is in charge of collecting the food and encouraging all students to participate.

Donations have been given to different organizations over the years. For the past three decades, however, the school has donated food to Bethel Gospel Assembly Church in Harlem, where Mr. William Best resides as a deacon. The school also donates food to Mr. Stanley Livingston's parish, United Congregational Church, in Bridgeport, CT.

"It's always an honor and privilege as we thank Saint David's for the donation of turkey and food we feed the Harlem community on Thanksgiving Day," said Mr. Best, who is one of the building services workers at school. "We feed close to 400 or 500 people on Thanksgiving, and we clothe them. Sometimes, they're families. A lot of migrants. In other words, if you're in the community and in need of food, you're more than welcome."

Mr. Livingston said, "It's a great thing the boys are doing. I'm glad to help in any way I can."

In New York, 44 percent of families with children don't have enough food, according to a recent report from the non-profit group Robin Hood.

"The need always grows," said Mr. Ryan. "There are always people who are hungry, whether in our neighborhood or across the globe." He added that "this is a perfect alignment with Saint David's values because we follow Saint David's values for helping our neighbors."

In addition to food donations, the drive sells delicious holiday pies and collects donation envelopes. Funds from these activities are used to buy "groceries, breakfast sausage, and more, allowing us to help feed more people," said Mr. Ryan.

Alex Johnston '25, who volunteered during the morning food collections and pie sales, said, "I like doing it because everything I do is helping people who need food."



"We feed close to 400 or 500 people on Thanksgiving."

– Mr. William Best

(Above) Oliver O'Boyle and Grade 8 classmates box donations.

DUFS Returns to the American Museum of Natural History

By Freddy Carlson '26

After three years, sixth-grade students have returned to the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) to participate in the Digital Universe Flight School, or DUFS.

DUFS began nearly a decade ago. The signature astronomy project challenges Saint David's students to research the cosmos with high-tech simulators that are typically used by experts at the museum's Hayden Planetarium. Due to the pandemic, however, the program was reduced, and students began presenting their research at the Otto-Bernstein Theatre.

"We're so excited to ramp up our work at the museum again this year. We're especially pleased that the boys will present in the Planetarium for their friends and family," said science teacher Mr. Bradford Hardie, who co-leads the program with Mr. Evan Rothstein.

During DUFS, pairs of students ask a question about the universe that they answer through thorough in-class research. In the past, research topics have been about volcanoes in outer space, water on different planets, the structure of the universe, and more. Once they complete their research, students write a script to present their findings, coordinating their talks with Planetarium-inspired shows. The sixth grade will share their DUFS projects at the AMNH in March.

Like many students, Leo Bastidas gives DUFS high marks. "I feel like I see something new every day even though I've been there many times before," he said. "It's so amazing."



(From left) Axel Jung, Mr. Evan Rothstein, and Leo Gregori exploring the cosmos at AMNH

Seeing the World Through Art

By Charlie Baer '25

On the first day of eighth grade this fall, students walked into their homerooms ready for a new start and excited for their last year at Saint David's. But their sense of chronological order was disrupted when a seventh-grade homeroom teacher suddenly walked into class carrying a photograph of a 3,000-year-old statue and a collection of pencils.

Mr. Drew Burton's unexpected appearance marked the start of the eighth-grade Art History program. Designed to develop a variety of skills, Art History leaves Saint David's boys with a new way of seeing the world.

"There are so many skills students learn," said Mr. Burton. "Some are more important than others, but all are important. The main skills that students study are close looking, interpretation, and noticing changes over time."

Students begin Art History by examining how paintings, sculpture, and other art forms represent different epochs throughout history. Students do this by analyzing the change of art over time, which

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Art History *Continued from page 3*

helps them to further understand the evolution of cultures. The course also encourages students to recognize particular perspectives and backgrounds of various artists in order to see the bigger picture (no pun intended).

Many students initially find the program confusing, but it inevitably grows on them. Eighth grader Roman Diaz said, “It was new territory because we had never studied specific analytical skills in Art History, and it forced us into a new perspective of art.”

As the course name implies, there is a lot of symmetry between Art History and History, as students analyze how historical context impacts a work of art. English also ties into the analytical part of art history since students often write about specific pieces of art. One example of this is an analytical presentation eighth graders give about specific pieces of art for the NBS Lectures program.

The most important subject that plays a role in Art History though is, of course, art. As part of the program, eighth-grade students practice drawing on Fridays during a block called Studiolo.

“This hands-on work is essential to interpreting the different perspectives of a work of art’s background and legacy,” said Mr. Burton.

Art History helps define a Saint David’s boy’s academic journey. By teaching skills such as interpretation, analysis, history, and cultural awareness, students leave Saint David’s with a new way of seeing the world. The program is crucial for boys to advance in their academics and as a person.

“There are so many skills students learn . . . close looking, interpretation, and noticing changes over time.”

– Mr. Drew Burton



(Above) Joseph Robinson '25



Visits to the Metropolitan Museum of Art are a cornerstone of Saint David’s Art History program.

Saint David's Energy Report Card

By Alex Bettwy '25

You may have noticed the piece of paper posted outside Saint David's window with a giant "C" written on it. It turns out, students aren't the only ones to earn grades. In New York City, large buildings do, too. The letter "C" represents Saint David's School's energy-efficiency rating. It's equivalent to a 60 out of 100. That's better than most buildings in the city, which earned D's on average. However, Saint David's has plans to boost its score.

Director of Facilities Mark Poelle says various factors impact energy grades. "First of all, there is some old equipment in the school that isn't as efficient as the modern equivalent," he said. "However, the school has plans to upgrade our heating, ventilation, and air conditioning units, especially on the townhouse side. There are also initiatives to install more insulated glass in order to keep more heat inside the building."

Saint David's is also planning on replacing its gas boilers as part of the HVAC upgrade. This will further reduce emissions. Over time, these upgrades will improve the building's energy efficiency, and its rating.

Buildings are the cause of almost 70 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions in New York City. In December 2017, the New York City Council sought to address the problem by passing a law that requires buildings bigger than 25,000 square feet to benchmark their consumption of energy and water. In 2019, the law was amended, and a new stipulation was added; a label containing the building's energy efficiency rating needed to be displayed in a "conspicuous location near each public entrance."

So keep your eye out. By upgrading current systems, Saint David's is making progress. Before you know it, the school will have an "A."

Psst . . . Did you know?

Buildings are the cause of almost 70 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions in New York City.



Saint David's energy rating is better than the average New York City building and on track to earning an A.

Beyond the Page!

Scan the QR Code to hear our new podcast, *Beyond the Page*. Co-hosts Alexander Bettwy and Henry Kadiyala interview Mr. Tom Ryan.



Fun and Games at Carnegie East

By Connor Shah '25



"These visits from the boys bring a light to my day."

—Ruth Dubrow



(Above) Seventh grade at Carnegie East

Saint David's seventh-grade students have gone to Carnegie East, an Upper East Side senior home, for well over 20 years.

"The residents love these visits because it brings joy to their day," said Mr. Jim Barbieri, who co-organizes the visits with Mr. John Dearie '95. "It's a longstanding religious initiative. Before visiting Carnegie East House, we used to visit the now-closed Florence Nightingale Nursing home."

Students visit Carnegie East every few weeks to chat with residents, play trivia games, and enjoy candy and soda together. But the real treat is the time the boys and their hosts spend getting to know each other. "These visits from the boys bring a light to my day," said Ruth Dombrow, who is thriving at 93.

Dombrow and other residents are tough to beat during a musical version of Trivia Pursuit, when a pianist plays a song from the past. Boys have never been able to name a song first, but the Carnegie East residents are happy to lend a hand. "Abe, he was super kind, and helped me answer many questions in the trivia. We really connected over our trivia knowledge and our love of the New York Rangers," said Miles Waterman '26.

In October, Saint David's boys dressed up as their favorite Halloween characters and tried to impress a panel of judges from Carnegie East. Jackson Feil '26, who was dressed up as Bob Ross, won first prize—an art kit. "After all the effort I put in for my costume, it was so generous to be rewarded," he said. "I had a lot of fun, and it was a great experience to get to know everyone."

The Spain Experience

By John Jones '25

Following Saint David's tradition, the Class of 2025 journeyed to Spain last summer. The two-week trip, which combines language-immersion classes, food, and field trips, took place in June in Salamanca. The municipality is located west of Madrid in the province of Castile-Leon.

Saint David's seventh-graders have traveled to Spain for 12 years as a way to deepen their fluency in Spanish and knowledge of the country.

"We want the boys to have an immersion experience and opportunities to develop intercultural competency," said Dr. Victoria Gilbert, who began the program and has led the trip every year.

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Dancing at Saint David's

By Tyler Williams '26

The National Dance Institute (NDI) was founded in 1976 by Jacques d'Amboise, a famous New York City ballet dancer and choreographer, to inspire students through dance. D'Amboise passed away in 2021, but NDI's student-dance program is still offered at Saint David's.

"I knew him personally and wanted his program to be a part of the school," said Mr. Jeffrey Moore, who was instrumental in bringing NDI to Saint David's. "Mr. d'Amboise grew up in the Bronx, and he said that his childhood was quite rough. He felt that ballet saved him and gave him so many opportunities. Saint David's has never had a dance program, so I felt it would provide different opportunities for our boys, too. At the same time, it gives them a new perspective on dancing."

Mr. Moore decided to launch the program for the third grade. "Students are more mature and capable of this kind of activity than the younger kids," he said.

Students like Joe Leraris heartily agree. "I like it at the start where we get to jump and wave," he said. His classmate, Rett Burton, said, "I like it when the workers say we're prepared."

This is the third year that NDI has come to Saint David's. This fall, students danced

weekly with dancers from the troupe while a pianist played live music. After ten weeks of work and fun, students performed at the Otto-Bernstein Theatre in December. Their show, "Evolution of Rock 'n Roll," featured music by Bruce Springsteen, Chuck Berry, and Tina Turner.

Rock classics are fine, but Charlie Kivitz said that his favorite moment in the performance was doing "the 3 Theta class dance."



The Spain Experience *Continued from page 6*

Students stay at a convent and attend daily language classes with native-speaking instructors.

This challenges them to "be responsible for navigating their own needs in the classroom with native-speaking teachers and beyond," said Dr. Gilbert. "If they go to a cafe, they have to order their own food, figure out how to pay, what an appropriate tip is, and the norms of interacting in a new culture. Siesta is something else they have to get used to!"



Students also go on plenty of field trips. Last summer, they went on a cheese-tasting trip, cooked paella, and visited a ham factory and various museums. They met a bullfighter, as well.

"I really loved all the field trips. I liked seeing cathedrals with lots of different art works," said Roman Diaz. "There was one with different paintings of stories from the Bible in Salamanca that was cool. I'm trying to deepen my faith. I've recently started reading the Bible, so I enjoyed seeing the stories like that."

(Top) The third grade dancing with NDI

(Left) The Class of 2025 in Spain last summer

A Look at the High School Admissions Process

By Kieran O'Connor '25

“The secondary school admission process is a very stressful but rewarding experience as it sets you for your next step in life,” says John Jones '25.

He isn't the only student who feels this way. The secondary-school admission process is a journey that every eighth grader at Saint David's must complete. The process begins the beginning of the school year into March, when admissions decisions are released. Because the process also conflicts with schoolwork, it can cause a plethora of stress.

The SSAT, short for Secondary School Admissions Test, is at the heart of it all. “This test is one of, if not the most important part of a student's application and makes your application all the more better,” said Mr. John Dearie '95, Director of Secondary School Counseling.

The exam sums up students' academic abilities and is used by high schools to assess applicants. Naturally, people study for this test a lot, so much so that it affects their schoolwork.

“The application process is very time-consuming, especially the writing and studying for the SSAT, which takes away time from my schoolwork, which causes me to become very stressed,” said Lake Porter '25.

Students also write several application essays, tailoring them to different schools. This is time-consuming, but the worst part of the admissions process is the four-month long wait before schools release their admissions decisions. Students mail their applications in December and wait until March to get a decision back.

This can be grueling for students as the pressure to succeed is high. However, the reward of seeing hard work pay off can feel exhilarating.

“My process was challenging,” said alumnus Peter Roberts '21. “However, I wouldn't change anything because the feeling of getting into my favorite school after all my hard work is something I would not want to miss for the world.”

The SSAT? Study (and Wear the Same Socks)

By Mac Wood '26

The Secondary School Admissions Test (SSAT) analyzes students' knowledge in math, reading comprehension, and vocabulary. To Saint David's students, it's a daunting task to overcome.

Seventh-grade students take a practice version of the SSAT a year before retaking the test in the fall of their eighth-grade year. That's when scores are sent to high schools as part of students' applications. Beyond these two tests, however, several students and alumni have additional ways to prepare.

Eighth-grade student Charlie Baer '25 said he took many different practice tests, studied vigorously throughout the summer, and that the most important source of help was his “tutors who taught me the different tricks and difficulties on the test.”

Alumnus Charlie Wood '21 said that he did really well on a variety of practice tests. Yet, he also made sure to wear the same outfit and even took the same pencils from the practice test. He believed his superstition paid off because his score increased from the practice test and helped him get into his current high school.

Dissecting the What and How of Nature

By Vikas Schultz '26

It's just past nine in the morning when a science teacher enters the lab with a bucket and parts of a squid. It's science class, and fifth-graders are going to learn about dissecting in order to deepen their knowledge of the mollusk. As students enter the lab, the materials and the animal that they will be dissecting are already placed on the tables, ready for them.

Dissection is normal procedure for science teacher, Mr. Sam Woolford, who teaches it in fifth grade, along with Mr. Bradford Hardie. Ms. Nora Sundar and Mr. Evan Rothstein lead the eighth grade in dissections. For those who are unfamiliar with them, dissections are practices in which someone cuts open an organism in order to learn what's inside; it's kind of like a surgery—but more of an experiment than a life-saving operation. At Saint David's, students do dissections in the fifth grade and the eighth grade. Their lessons aim to show how different animals are actually closer to humans than they may seem.

While these dissections may seem like a pretty normal procedure at Saint David's, over the last 20 years, fewer schools have been doing dissections, surveys show. Instead, students take apart models of fake organisms. "It's rare that middle-school students do dissections," says Mr. Woolford.

Despite this downward trend, roughly 75 percent of high schoolers globally are expected to dissect before they make it into college, according to Jan Oakley, author of *Under the Knife: Animal Dissection as a Contested School Science Activity*.

"Fifth-graders learn about plant and animal adaptations," said Mr. Woolford. "Most students enjoy it and look forward to the dissections. Dissecting teaches what animals are like on the outside and on the inside and helps show examples of animal adaptation."

That inspires students like fifth-grader Dylan Fairtlough '28, who called dissections "a cool way to learn about the different body parts of different animals."



(Above) As students in Grade 8 dissect a cow's eyeball, they discover how different types of tissues build an organ.

(Right) Fifth graders dissect a squid to learn about adaptation.



Patrick Dere Elected Student Council President

By Henry Kadiyala '25

Let me tell you about a story about a boy. In fourth grade, he ran for Student Council and lost. But he didn't give up. He ran again the next year, and the year after that, and the year after that, never winning. But he still didn't give up. In eighth grade, he shocked his peers by winning the title of Class Representative. And then he won the presidential election, too. His name is Patrick Dere '25. Although he downplayed his perseverance during his election day speech, Dere opened up when he sat down with the *Canticle* for the following interview:



(From left) Oliver O'Boyle, Dr. David O'Halloran, Patrick Dere, and Thomas DePaolo

What made you keep running, year after year?

Well, I really wanted to be a representative once, just to try it. I ran last year and definitively lost. But then friends and family convinced me to just run one last time. After all, why not?

What campaign promises have you delivered so far, and what do you still want to work on?

As of now, the toaster is pretty much done. The toaster is in the building, like it is physically here. We are just sorting out some electrical issues, and we can expect it in early December.

"I may be a little biased because they're my friends outside of Student Council, but they're just so much fun to work with."

—Patrick Dere

What's your biggest challenge so far?

I feel like balancing it with a lot of high school stuff. Like, to be real, it's a lot. I have a lot of people on my case about not doing much yet, but I can only ask so much for a toaster, and I am by no means an electrical engineer!

Thomas DePaolo won as Senator and Oliver O'Boyle is Vice President. What is it like to work with them?

They're wonderful. Honestly, I may be a little biased because they are both my friends outside of Student Council, but they're just so much fun to work with.

What previous Student Council president do you hope to live up to?

Absolutely Robert Callender. First off, he kept every single promise he ever made. The entire school for three years wanted Hint Water™ gone. All presidents promised it, but he actually got it done. Same with toasters. It was a big issue last year, but I think I can achieve it for the school.

Finish the sentence: The most rewarding part about being Student Council President is . . .

. . . Leadership opportunities, of course, and leading the school that I've loved for so long. 10

Yondr Pouches Spark Debate

By Soren Klimczak '26



A student's Yondr pouch is opened at the end of the day.

When Saint David's began using Yondr pouches to safeguard students' electronics at the start of 2022, the lockable gray pockets immediately sparked a fiery debate. Some (typically students) criticize Yondr pouches as inconvenient. Others (normally teachers) praise them as a practical method for supporting students to do their best.

"We did a lot of research on how phones are addictive and distracting during school and that it was a nationwide issue," said Dr. Evan Morse. As the Assistant Head of Upper School, Dr. Morse ensures that students use

their Yondr pouches, and he's seen how they impact classroom dynamics.

"Before the Yondr pouches were implemented, it was a lot of work for the teachers to monitor students," he said. "We also wanted a technology-free system. So, we found a trend of places using Yondr pouches and observed that they were a successful system in other places, like Broadway shows and other schools."

At Saint David's, Yondr pouches are used by students in Grades 5 through 8. Each morning, boys secure their cell phones, smartwatches, and other small electronics in the pouches, which are equipped with magnetic locks. Coaches, teachers, or administrators open the pouches when boys leave school for the day.

Love them or loathe them, numerous studies confirm that Yondr pouches are an intelligent way to support students' well-being.

That bothers students like Victor Iosilevich, in seventh grade. "Sometimes the Yondr opener isn't there, and I must wait for someone to open it," he said.

Another student, Mark Carey, said, "They restrict my ability to contact my parents in case of emergency, and they are expensive. The money used on them could be used for other things to 'make students' lives more enjoyable.'"

Other students agree. In a recent poll by the *Canticle*, 75 percent of students disliked Yondr pouches, far more than the roughly 10 percent who like them. Fifteen percent of students said they both liked and disliked the pouches.

Love them or loathe them, numerous studies confirm that Yondr pouches are an intelligent way to support students' well-being. According to the National Institutes of Health, students who have cell phones taken away from them during class show "higher levels of course comprehension, lower levels of anxiety, and higher levels of mindfulness."

Spanish teacher Leonor Brenes said, "The pouches remove the temptation of checking the phones, which prevents students from getting distracted, which could happen before Yondr pouches were implemented."

Such findings are convincing schools to adopt Yondr pouches, too. Since Saint David's began using them two years ago, schools in 41 states have spent \$2.5 million on them, according to a report from Govspend.com.

The Big Jump

By William Smith '26

Standardized entrance exams. Highly competitive sports. More homework. The Poconos and Spain. Without question, the jump from sixth to seventh grade is a big one, but this fall, Saint David's boys proved that they are ready for the challenge.

"Seventh grade will be a huge jump from sixth grade," said George Creedon '26, at the start of the year. "I'm expecting the academics to be more challenging, but I'm ready to lock in and have a plan to succeed this year."

Creedon's comments summarize what the majority of the seventh graders think about the school year.

In addition to facing down rigorous homework assignments, students also have more challenging sports requirements. That's because students in fifth and sixth grade pick a sport and play it, regardless of their skill level. In seventh and eighth grades, however, students have to try out to compete for a spot on one of the competitive White or Red teams. Playing on one of these teams is a big commitment, too, due to the increased amount of games.

"The athletics in seventh grade is considerably different than sixth grade, as it comes with more responsibilities and challenges," said Christian Young '26, who played flag football during the fall for Saint David's. "It is far more challenging to manage being on one of these competitive teams, but I am ready to perform at this high level."

Student-athletes like Young have to balance their schedules well beyond the school day to get everything done. This year, Saint David's unveiled new planners that enable boys to schedule homework with other demands, including before- and after-school activities, travel sports teams outside of school, and much more.

This fall, Saint David's gave students new planners to help them stay on track.

"The purpose of the planners was to benefit all students in the Upper School," said Dr. Evan Morse. "We wanted to accommodate students in fourth to sixth grade to enable them to plan out their weeks with homework and extracurriculars while also helping seventh- and eighth-grade students organize their work and out-of-school activities."

In conclusion, the big jump from sixth to seventh grade presents a tough challenge. To succeed, students must possess the three C's: Confidence, Commitment, and Competitiveness.

"The purpose of the new planners was to benefit all students in the upper school."

– Dr. Evan Morse



(Left) At the Poconos.: the trip is a signature event for Grade 7.

A “WrAD” Way to Write

By William Kadiyala '25

You may have noticed the one-paragraph writing assignments with one or more prompts to choose from in English, History, and Science, all following the same outline.

It's no coincidence!

All of these assignments are part of a new program for grades K-8, called WrAD, short for Writing Across the Disciplines. It was created by Ms. Catherine Milligan, Dr. Evan Morse, Ms. Margaret Lee, and Ms. Sara Molinari. Its goal, said Ms. Milligan, is to “streamline how writing is taught” through frequent practice in a variety of classes.

Writing has always been important at Saint David's, and boys have always had writing assignments in classes other than English. However, the standards and requirements for writing assignments often varied dramatically depending on the course. WrAD was specifically created to provide a “clear framework” for different classes while “refining” what teachers taught in English, said Ms. Milligan.

“Writing is a vital skill, a root of expression, argument, and exploration,” Ms. Milligan said. “Practice can override any lack of confidence or preconception that writing is hard or something to dread.”

WrAD requires students to focus just as much attention on outlines and the prewriting process as they do writing and revising their work.

In science this fall, students used WrAD to write lab reports. “They're definitely better because WrAD scaffolds the process before they jump in and write,” said Mr. Evan Rothstein. “Students may not associate writing with science, but most finished products in real science are in journals and lab reports.”

Students are slowly becoming accustomed to WrAD, but some feel that its consistent prompts make them monotonous at times, which led to a feeling that “there isn't a clear point why we are doing it,” said eighth grader Thomas DePaolo.

The value of WrAD—and writing—becomes clearer the more students write. In fact, it's important that students “use the process, try every step, communicate with teachers, and [are not] afraid of a mess or mistakes at first,” said Ms. Milligan.

She also encourages developing writers to keep meeting with their teachers and drop in for help at a Writing Workshop, which are held daily before or after school.



(Above and Right) WrAD nurtures students' writing throughout their time at Saint David's.

“Writing is a vital skill, a root of expression, argument, and exploration.”

–Ms. Catherine Milligan



Sports

Racing to the Finish

By Alex DiMauro '26

Saint David's Cross Country Team had an overall great season, finishing strong at its final meet at Van Cortlandt Park in October.

"Everyone worked very hard to accomplish our season goal of finishing the season with their best times," said Coach Ryan Soltan. "The boys posted excellent times throughout the year and should be proud of how they performed."

Twelve seventh and eighth graders made up the 2024 roster. In their final meet, Saint David's athletes raced against nearly 200 competitors. Alexander Bettwy '25 outpaced most of the competition and crossed the finish line in ninth place after completing the mile-and-a-half course in 10 minutes, nine seconds. Soren Klimczak '25 came in 20th after 10 minutes and 40 seconds. Charlie Vandever '26 finished in 10 minutes, 44 seconds, claiming 24th place.

"We all ran our hardest and supported each other the whole way," said Bettwy.

Mr. Soltan coaches the team with Coach Dana Smolen and Coach Craig Learn.



(Above) The 2024 Cross Country Team



(Left to Right) Charlie Vandever and Alexander Bettwy raced over the finish at their final meet.

Touchdown! A Successful Flag Football Season

By Kai Mejia '26

This year's flag football season was a big hit among Saint David's boys, bringing great success to its athletic program. Both teams combined posted seven wins to only three losses. According to Coach Kevin Neylon, the flag football program is thriving and he hopes to see it all progress in years to come. "It was a great season, thanks to the boys' dedication and work," Neylon said.

"The program took a big leap forward due to the boys' understanding of flag football and their willingness to be coachable." *Continued on page 15*

Touchdown! *Continued from page 14*

Like many New York City schools, Saint David's students play flag football instead of tackle football because it's safer and it's "becoming more prevalent in middle schools and around the world. They have flag football in the Olympics now," Neylon said.

The competition was tough, fun, and hard-fought, and like many sports, flag football offered many lessons besides the ones on the field. Players learned good physical skills while building teamwork, problem-solving, discipline—and most of all—good sportsmanship.

"It's a long season, and boys do get hurt, and everyone stepped up to the plate to play all positions," said Neylon. "It helps with life lessons in the sense that even when it seems that you're out of the game, one play can turn it around. You can't look at the past. You always have to look to the next play."

While it is sad to see the end of flag football season, players look forward to participating next year and carrying these skills into adulthood. Congratulations to Coach Kevin Neylon, Coach Ted Friedman, Coach Chris Murphy, and Coach Mike Balter on a fun and successful season!

New Year, New Coach

By Jackson Feil '26 and Griffin Roth '26

This fall, Saint David's soccer program welcomed a new face, Coach Melanie Formosa. Her name might seem familiar because she used to teach Pre-K and Alpha, and her mom used to be Headmaster Dr. David O'Halloran's assistant.

Before coming to Saint David's, Coach Formosa trained boys' and girls' soccer teams at Marymount High School, Asphalt Green, and Chelsea Piers. When she saw an opportunity to coach the White Soccer team at Saint David's this year, she leapt at the chance.

"I wanted to return to coaching because of the opportunity to work with young athletes again and help them grow both on and off the field," said Formosa. "I'm passionate about developing not just soccer skills, but also teamwork and confidence. Being able to share my love for the sport with the students here at Saint David's has been incredibly rewarding."

Coach Formosa played soccer at the collegiate level, which has greatly influenced her coaching philosophy. "Playing in college helped me understand the level of commitment and the mental toughness required to succeed, and I try to pass that along to the team. I know what it takes to push through challenges and I want to help these students find that resilience."

This season, Coach Formosa led White Soccer, which finished the season 4-3-1, kicking off with a strong 3-0 win against Allen-Stevenson and closing with a 5-0 win against Buckley.

"When I look back on this season, I'm really proud of the progress the team made. We started strong and faced some tough challenges as the season went along, but the players showed great resilience and growth," Coach Formosa said.

Next year, Ms. Formosa will coach the team with Mr. Mark Doocey. In the meantime, she coaches Club Basketball.



Coach Melanie Formosa

Saint David's "Well-Red" Coach

By Jake Salvatore '26

This fall, Coach Vincent Russo took over coaching Red Soccer. Previously, the team had been led by Coach Bernie Evangelista, who left after many successful years at Saint David's. Coach Russo met with the *Canticle* soon after the team wrapped up its season, finishing with a 2-2-2 record in the Manhattan Private Middle School League (MPMSL) and an overall record of 6-2-3.



Coach Vincent Russo with the Red Soccer team

When did you first start playing soccer?

I was first introduced to soccer between the ages of four and five. I grew up in Rome, Italy, where soccer is the main sport of the country. My grandfather played soccer in Italy and he passed along his passion of the sport to my father, who also played and later coached youth soccer for many years. In turn, my father passed along his love of the game to my four older brothers and me. I wanted to follow in their footsteps and learn to play the beautiful game of soccer.

You mentioned Italy. Have you had a chance to play soccer in other countries?

Yes, I'm fortunate the game of soccer has provided me opportunities to travel the world. As a player, and later when working in professional soccer, I was able to visit Brazil, Italy, Netherlands, England, and Austria. While playing college soccer, I traveled throughout the U.S.

Do you have a preference coaching White or Red Soccer?

I enjoy both. Most of the players competing with the White Soccer team had previous experience playing against other schools when they were sixth graders. Thus, I enjoyed the challenge of developing players to compete at an even higher level. It was always gratifying to see players with White Soccer try out the following season and make the Red Soccer roster as eighth graders. For Red Soccer, I enjoy seeing the boys compete with the goal to add additional championships to the storied soccer program at Saint David's.



(Above) Coach Vincent Russo trains players like Raffi Pamoukian '26 to apply lessons from sports to life.

What's it like to work with your brother, Coach Anthony Russo?

I love it! He's always been a role model for me, on and off the athletic field. As a player, I always aspired to be like him: he was lefty, and I was as well, We wore the same number (10), and I played the same position as well. He was always a captain for his teams and it inspired me to captain my teams. In the classroom, he was a top student and it inspired me to perform well academically too. (of course, for our parents, it was studies first, sports second!). Most importantly, I have always admired his honesty, work ethic, and genuine care for his players. He shows me that teaching sports is also teaching important life lessons that sports can provide. I am lucky to be surrounded by him and all the excellent coaches at Saint David's.

From Student to Coach

By Ryan Parsons '25

Coach Andrew Hahn '12 was not always the coach we know; he used to be a Saint David's Boy! In seventh grade, Coach Hahn played on the White soccer team, basketball, and baseball teams, and the next year, he continued Red basketball and baseball.

Now, he's back at Saint David's as a coach.

"The opportunity presented itself, and I wanted to come back. I remember the fun times I had and the impact coaches and teachers had on me. I try to replicate that," Coach Hahn said, adding that he also wanted to return to his Alma Mater because of its "great culture and community."

Today, Saint David's student-athletes still play the same sports as Coach Hahn. What's more, many of the current coaching staff are the same, including Director of Athletics Pedro Morales and coaches William Arias, Chris Murphy, Craig Learn, and Anthony Russo.

However, there are new features to the athletics program that take some getting used to, as well. For instance, when Coach Hahn was a student, the locker room was located in the school's current kitchen space. But sports time made up for it; short periods ran 90 minutes, and longer classes were two hours. Most changes are easy to adapt to, but Coach Hahn admits that "at first, it was a little weird to call people I've known for a long time coworkers. I'm sure they felt the same way. But everyone welcomed me with open arms."



Coach Andrew Hahn '12 (Right) and Coach William Arias with last year's White Basketball team

Opinion

The Pen? Not Necessarily Mightier

By Eten Babakhanian '26

For centuries, people have come up with ideas and written them down for posterity. Historically, theological musings, scientific breakthroughs, and other ideas have been meticulously etched onto vellum, papyrus, and paper until the 20th Century.

When people have the choice of writing on paper or typing on the computer, most choose the computer. It's more efficient and more enjoyable to most people. On the other hand, according to studies, writing on paper helps us memorize more information and process it faster.

Personally, I prefer typing. I think it's a pain to write on paper most of the time, and typing something makes it possible to put ideas on the Internet, which means they generally won't get lost, unlike a piece of paper that can be easily tossed or destroyed. However, if you write something on an app and the app discontinues, what you wrote will never be accessible.

According to studies, the best way of writing for your brain is using a pen called a stylus on a tablet. This is the best of both worlds, as it produces dopamine from typing and the brain benefits of writing with a pen or pencil.

I've used a stylus and tablet once, and it felt a bit weird. It gave me dopamine like typing does. At the same time, the stylus felt a lot like writing on paper with one notable exception; the stylus can slide across or even off the tablet. This can be frustrating, but with enough practice, you will get used to it. Overall, I'd say typing is much better than writing or using a stylus.

Pen Over Power

By Henry Kadiyala '25

In this new age of technology, it's astonishing what students can do with a minimal effort. With just a few clicks on a keyboard, they can find any fact in the world. During the pandemic, Saint David's School wholly embraced online lesson plans and a wider circulation of devices. That enabled students and teachers to be in the same room while scattered across the state, country, and even world. However, I don't believe that is a sustainable model for the future.

The Internet is a blessing and a curse for research. Every database, website, and paper in existence can be found online. In need of a quick clarification? Just a few word searches done in milliseconds and you have the information you want.

But that's exactly the problem.

If information can be found so quickly, research becomes a chore rather than an essential part of the academic process. I know that in order to meet my Noodletools sources and notecards quota, I have rushed, putting little thought into the information I chose simply to meet my deadline. I didn't use dubious sources. Unfortunately, some people aren't so careful. Though textbooks can be an encumbrance, their contents has been vetted as factual. Moreover, taking notes from textbooks teaches students the value of careful research.

Additionally, many studies have shown that writing with a physical writing utensil is much better for memory retention. But in many of my classes, notes are often completed on a computer, which then leads to lower comprehension, and in turn, lower grades. Couple that with the fact that computers have a litany of online distractions available for students. It is my opinion that at Saint David's, computers should be limited to long writing assignments or only when truly necessary.

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Games

Saint David's Word Search

C	T	O	Y	A	R	T	S	T	U	D	I	O	Y
P	L	O	B	B	Y	C	H	A	I	L	L	C	C
R	L	E	G	S	R	L	T	M	H	O	M	E	N
I	M	O	L	B	O	E	I	S	U	O	E	G	S
C	A	N	C	O	I	A	M	H	L	M	A	M	C
E	L	T	B	C	D	M	S	E	D	N	Y	D	I
G	L	B	E	H	U	A	O	B	S	A	M	S	E
Y	A	O	N	A	T	H	U	M	E	E	N	S	N
M	H	H	N	P	S	O	R	L	B	O	M	B	C
B	N	R	O	E	C	D	M	Y	M	H	A	H	E
M	A	O	G	L	I	C	U	M	T	O	M	H	L
P	M	P	Y	B	S	E	O	E	N	B	M	P	A
M	Y	H	M	I	U	C	G	C	R	P	B	M	B
L	H	R	U	I	M	I	I	I	A	T	A	P	Y

Puzzle created by Ryan Parsons '25

COMMONS
ART STUDIO
HUME
MUSIC STUDIO
CHAPEL
OBT
SMITH
HYMAN HALL
SCIENCE LAB
BENNO GYM
PRICE GYM
LOBBY