

INSIDE

FROM OUR
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

page 2

MEET AIDAN AND GREY

page 3

ST. MICHAEL'S
SNIPPETS

page 4

HOW YOU CAN MAKE
A DIFFERENCE

page 4

DID YOU KNOW?

page 5



Fall 2018

Welcome Autumn



Fall Happenings

A cool September evening, the company of friends, a breathtaking view, a fabulous catered lobster and steak dinner, and live music - the perfect combination for our annual fundraiser, St. Michael's Table, that supports scholarship assistance needs.

Thanks to **Bill Dugdale and Sydney Van Dyke** who once again graciously hosted the event on the grounds of their home that overlooks a rolling Chadds Ford expanse. Guests enjoyed wonderful remarks by St. Michael's alum, **Alyssa Bradley**, daughter of **U.S. Representative Lisa Blunt Rochester**, the event's Honorary Chair. We were delighted to have Congresswoman

Rochester make a surprise visit! After dinner, a friendly live bidding competition ensued for vacation packages in Umbria, Italy and Teton Pines, Wyoming.

We're so grateful to all who attended, sponsored and donated! Your generosity makes it possible for more of Wilmington's youngest children to receive a strong foundation and prepare for success in school.

Of course, the Fall season wouldn't be complete without our annual school Harvest Parade and family trip to Milburn Orchards!



See more event photos @ stmichaelsde.org.
Photography by Four Youth Productions





From Our Executive Director



Every profession has its acronyms that are second nature to those within but rather foreign to others. The early childhood profession has a long list, covering not only its profession but also the vast network of services that support young children and their families. However, within the profession, EEC and DAP are universal and represent extremely important components.

Early childhood education had much to celebrate when the brain research studies of the 90's clearly demonstrated what we in the profession had always known; young children are capable of learning and absorbing a great deal. A tremendous amount of learning takes place in the first few years of life, and understanding how to facilitate that learning with the style of interactions, the design of environments, and the training of teachers is tantamount to creating an educational experience beyond simply a safe, caregiving placement. The importance of replacing "daycare" with "Early Education and Care" (ECE) became the new goal for our youngest. Our profession is evolving rapidly and St. Michael's staff is rising to those challenges.

Over the last two decades, quality in EEC has become a driving force behind funding, educational placement and advancement, and general concern for the brain development of all young children, regardless of the environment or circumstances of their birth. For many years, the National Association for the Education of Children (NAEYC) was the only quality assurance standard; in fact, their accreditation remains the standard for the highest level of recognized excellence in most states. There are several factors in achieving a high quality EEC environment, and all those factors require a knowledge of child development and a subsequent recognition of the mechanics of the developing mind. Children do not think or learn in the same manner as adults and young children do not think and learn in the same manner as older children whose brains are more physically developed and matured to other levels. Young children learn best through interactive, multi-sensorial ways; most often, play is the vehicle of the most successful

learning. Young children think differently, not deficiently. Those differences need to be respected and accommodated to ensure that the skills and lessons they learn are incorporated into their development.

Authentic is an important word in EEC. Those authentic experiences happen when teachers understand developmental stages and know how to challenge, entice, and nurture children as they learn; teachers create situations that draw children in and build the foundations of later learning. Young children learn best when developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) is used to set the foundations of literacy, numeracy, and language as well as gross and fine motor and social-emotional skills. These skills are learned through interacting with materials and other people in ways that make the most sense to young children, using as many of their senses as a creative teacher can address. Flash cards, repetitive teacher-directed drills, and work sheets may be appropriate for elementary school age children who have a solid understanding of what letters and numbers are, as well as what to do with the information that is being presented. But for young children who are still learning the basics of verbal language, of counting and categorizing, of sharing and turn taking and resolving conflicts, etc., etc.--these finite exercises of rote are, at best, attractive displays and, at worst, disconnected incidents that may be confusing and ultimately discourage higher thinking such as creativity and the ability to connect learning to the next level.

Our intent here at St. Michael's is to offer our children the best practices that will excite them and give them the basic tools and skills to become lifelong learners. Early childhood is not a race, but a time to build a strong, deep, and broad foundation of interests, skills, and experiences which will then support successful learning in whatever mode of instruction presented.

Come and visit. Ask questions. Offer feedback. Support St. Michael's. What we do here matters.

Lucinda Ross, M.Ed.

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Would you prefer to receive electronic copies of our newsletter instead of print?



Send an email to admin@stmichaelsde.org and let us know!
(You will have the option to unsubscribe at any time.)





Aidan & Grey

Brothers Aidan and Grey were adopted by their aunt, Wendy, at a young age. While both had come from a troubled environment, Grey (right), in particular, had experienced a great deal of trauma. He was a toddler when Wendy enrolled him at St. Michael's.

Over time and with the support of his teachers, "*Grey went from being a timid little boy who struggled with stuttering to a confident, positive kid who is always smiling,*" Wendy recalls. "*I know he will excel at whatever he does*".

The boys started kindergarten and first grade this year at Eisenburg Elementary. Wendy says, "The nurturing they received at St. Michael's has helped prepare them for the real world. They work to bring out the best in their students."

'The teachers at St. Michael's truly love their students and want them to succeed in all they do.' - Wendy V.

On the Advocacy Front



Photo Captions: 1) St. Michael's held a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony in May to celebrate the expansion of its Infant and Toddler Programs. John Gentile of **U.S. Senator Tom Carper's office**, Wilmington City Council President **Hanifa Shabazz** and City Council Member **Michelle Harlee** were among the featured speakers. Christ Church Christiana Hundred Rector **Rev. Ruth Beresford** blessed the new wing. We enjoyed visits by 2) **U.S. Senator Chris Coons** and 3) Delaware First Lady **Tracey Quillen Carney** for discussions around the importance of continued investment in early childhood education.



5 Easy Ways You Can Make a Difference



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You shop (and we *know* you do), Amazon gives. St. Michael's is enrolled in AmazonSmile, so Amazon will donate .5% of the price of your eligible purchases to our school at no cost to you every time you shop. Go to smile.amazon.com and choose St. Michael's School and Nursery as your charity. Then start shopping!



Help us Reach 500 Likes on Facebook

See what's happening each week at St. Michael's. Like and follow us! facebook.com/StMichaelsSchoolAndNursery/



Collect Box Tops Coupons

Find Box Tops for Education coupons on hundreds of General Mills products from cereal and produce to bakeware to cleaning products and office supplies. Clip the Box Tops coupons and drop them off at the front desk at St. Michael's. Each Box Top is worth 10¢ for our school. boxtops4education.com



Support Scholarship Needs

Every child deserves to benefit from a quality early care experience regardless of income level. Scholarship assistance helps us bridge the financial gap by providing all children equal access to our 5-Star level center. Make your tax-deductible gift online @ stmichaelsde.org or use the enclosed envelope.



Write a Google Review

Positive reviews help boost our online business presence! Take five minutes to go to Google and search for "St. Michael's School and Nursery". When our ad appears on the right side of the screen, click on the "Write a Review" button to leave a review.

St. Michael's Snippets



Photos: 1) Our End-of-the-Summer Bash was a blast! Our students and families enjoyed crafts, games, live music, face painting and more. Thank you to **Bank of America** for providing the free pizza. 2) We love our **Read Aloud Delaware** volunteers! 3) Our Board of Directors acknowledged outgoing Chair **Charles B.**

Ryan (center) for his service and integral role in the expansion of our Infant and Toddler wing by naming the school's reception area in his honor. 4) Mike Wilson, Founder of **PREP** (Prekindergarten Reading Encouragement Project) leads a literacy exercise with one of our Pre-K classes. PREP provides free books and literacy kits to St. Michael's and several other Wilmington schools and families.



Making Professional Development A Priority

Our faculty and staff continue to further their education through college course work and specialized early childhood teaching credentials. A dozen members of our faculty enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs at local colleges and universities this year. Through the Delaware Association for the Education of Young Children (DeAEYC) many of our teachers are able to pursue Associate and Bachelor degrees at no cost through the T.E.A.C.H. program. This program works in coordination with St. Michael's so our teachers are able to better balance their school and work careers as well as their personal lives.

Each day we provide extra coverage in classrooms to allow for faculty members to attend classes at Del Tech's Wilmington campus. Through the T.E.A.C.H. program our teachers are also able to pursue their Child Development

Associates (CDA), which is a nationally recognized teaching credential for early childhood teachers. Currently, three teachers have attained their CDAs through the T.E.A.C.H. program and six are in the process of completing their CDA portfolios. It's true! Our teachers rock!!!



Did You Know?



Source: "Wilmington Community Asset and Resource Mapping: An Analysis of the Resources Available to Residents of the City of Wilmington, Delaware". The Institute for Public Policy, University of Delaware. May 2018.



63% of children who live in Wilmington's Eastside neighborhood where St. Michael's is located live in poverty.



The Eastside has relatively few resources and community organizations, including highly-rated, licensed early childhood providers, for those who have the greatest need.



St. Michael's is ONE of only three early childhood providers in the Eastside with a Delaware Stars 5-Star rating.



Location is a key factor for early childhood education programs, particularly for low income families who may have transportation challenges.



ST. MICHAEL'S
SCHOOL AND NURSERY, INC.

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Look for the article
on St. Michael's in
the *Delaware
Business Times*
this month!

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*"It is easier to build strong children
than repair broken men."*

- Frederick Douglass

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Lucinda Ross, M.Ed.

OUR MISSION

St. Michael's School and Nursery is committed to the growth and support of children's development in mind, body, character and spirit. We provide an exemplary program of education and childcare in a nurturing environment. St. Michael's welcomes all children.

www.stmichaelsde.org | 302.656.3389



HAPPY
Thanksgiving

**FROM OUR FAMILIES
TO YOURS'**



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