



700 N. Walnut Street
Wilmington, DE 19801-3514



INSIDE: Find out how St. Michael's has been addressing the COVID-19 crisis as an early childhood provider.

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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.

stmichaelsde.org | 302.656.3389

 [StMichaelsSchoolAndNursery](https://www.facebook.com/StMichaelsSchoolAndNursery)

admin@stmichaelsde.org



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WHAT'S INSIDE

BLACK HISTORY
MONTH
CELEBRATION
page 2

HOW YOU CAN HELP
page 2

BEYOND STRESS
MANAGEMENT
page 3

HIGHMARK WALK
GOES VIRTUAL
page 3

Photo: Staff distribute emergency "Grab and Go" bags daily in front of the school. St. Michael's is now one of the city's distribution sites for Wilmington families in need of fresh meals.

A ST. MICHAEL'S EXPERIENCE MEANS...



A DELAWARE STARS 5-STAR LEVEL CENTER

The highest level of quality for an early care and education center as rated by the state's Department of Education



STRONG FAMILY-SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Year-round, extended hours that support working families. Activities and trainings to strengthen family bonds and guidance in choosing the right elementary school.



NURTURING AND STIMULATING ENVIRONMENTS

Low student-teacher ratios for individualized teaching, learning through play, and a trauma-informed approach that includes social and emotional wellness programs.



COMMITMENT TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Striving to hire qualified staff and support teachers in furthering their education and skills.



A HISTORY OF SERVICE

130 years of serving Wilmington families and preparing children for success in school.



the school SCOOP

2020 SPRING UPDATE

We're Still Here...and Offering Curbside Pickup

We hope each of you is continuing to be well and are finding some bright spots and new opportunities in the midst of these times we are in.

Since the Covid-19 outbreak, we have been experiencing many of the same emotions as you – anxiety and concern over how to best navigate the unknown. In the face of the unknown, however, there was one guiding truth that we did know - the safety of our children, families and staff was our utmost priority. With safety at the forefront, St. Michael's made the decision to follow the state's K-12 school closings rather than remain open. Large childcare centers are by no means a controlled environment.

Our board and leadership considered applying to be an Emergency Center to care for children of essential personnel. The more we discussed, however, the more it appeared that the number of slots needed would likely be less than anticipated while the liability and responsibility on our center would be much greater. St. Michael's is receiving par-

tial funding from the state and has received a Small Business Administration loan so we can retain and pay our staff. However, these funds do not cover all of our ongoing operational expenses. We continue to work with our funders and individual supporters in order to sustain our program.

While our brick and mortar are closed, St. Michael's is working to be creative in how we continue to offer services to children and families. We keep communication lines open with parents and caregivers, offering emergency pick ups such as meals, diapers and formula or feminine products donated by The Junior League of Wilmington. We are sharing notifications about available community supports and educating on ways to support their children given upended routines and structure.

Teachers have been charged with using this time for both professional development and staying engaged with their children and families by sharing activities to do at home and sending messages regularly.

Our leadership and Board remain vigilant on advocating for what is best for our youngest learners as well as how to best prepare for the long-term financial impact COVID-19 will have on our center and the profession.

Executive Director Lucinda Ross is part of a newly-formed task force that includes representatives from the Delaware Association for the Education of Young Children, Head Start, family and center-based providers and state agencies. The task force will examine immediate needs and issues and consider all aspects of re-opening childcare centers in the hopes of offering insight to the Governor's office as part of the state's phase-in plans.

Your support and dialogue are so important to us right now. We are still here and remain thankful for the strength and resiliency of the St. Michael's community. Please be safe, take care of yourselves and stay connected to us.



We hope you are finding some creative new ways to enjoy the Spring.

Celebrating Black History Month

What a way to celebrate Black History Month in February and kick off St. Michael's 130th Anniversary! THANK YOU to all who attended, sponsored and supported our "Progress in Perspective" event on February 21st at the Delaware History Museum. It truly was a wonderful evening of engaging in important dialogue around education and equity in Wilmington, connecting with old friends and making new ones.

So many special people made it possible. Thank you to U.S. Congresswoman Lisa Blunt Rochester for the opening remarks and to our amazing group of panelists: Senator Elizabeth "Tizzy" Lockman, Dr. Bebe Coker, Bishop Aretha Morton and Dr. Francine Edwards and moderator Dr. Eugene Young. And, of course, support from the legendary Rev. Canon Lloyd Casson as Honorary Chair was invaluable.

Special thanks to the Delaware Historical Society for the St. Michael's archive displays as well as Board Member Evan Lober and Squatch Creative for the beautiful 130th Anniversary commemorative video.

We look forward to continuing the celebration when we can all be together again. In the meantime, see the anniversary video and more event photos on our website.

View the 130th anniversary video:
<https://www.stmichaelsde.org/about-us/mission-and-history/>

Find event photos here: <https://www.stmichaelsde.org/category/events/>

HOW YOU CAN HELP

THE NEED FOR QUALITY, AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FOR ALL CHILDREN WILL STILL EXIST WHEN OUR DOORS RE-OPEN.

As St. Michael's continues to help and support families during this crisis, our operating needs continue. Your gift is needed now more than ever while we prepare for the long-term financial realities of this crisis. Here are some ways you can invest in our mission of welcoming all children right from where you are:

- Make a Mother's Day gift to St. Michael's this month in honor/memory of your mother, grandmother or other mother.
- Give a donation for Father's Day in June in honor/memory of your father, grandfather or father figure.
- Register and walk in the virtual Highmark Walk or donate to other walkers now through June 30th.
- Subscribe to St. Michael's email updates via our website.
- Consider us in your bequest.

Please use the enclosed envelope or make your gift online: stmichaelsde.org

*Thank You
for caring!*

Thank You to Our Event Sponsors



The Hon. M. Jane Brady
The Rev. and Mrs. Cal Wick



L to R: Dr. Eugene Young, Dr. Bebe Coker, the Rev. Canon Lloyd Casson, Dr. Francine Edwards, Bishop Aretha Morton, Lucinda Ross and Sen. Elizabeth "Tizzy" Lockman

The Week of the Young Child™ is an annual celebration in April sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the world's largest early childhood education association, with nearly 60,000 members and a network of 51 Affiliates. The Week of the Young Child™ (WOYC) is a time to recognize that children's opportunities are all of our responsibilities, and to recommit ourselves to ensuring that each and every child experiences the type of early environment—at home, at child care, at school, and in the community—that will promote their early learning.

St. Michael's staff celebrated WOYC's daily themes this year by sharing tips and activities on social media and through videos with families. For example, in a Facebook post for "Artsy Thursday", admin staff member Ashlinn Lorenzana shared a quick and easy lesson in abstract art using finger paint, a piece of paper and a one gallon freezer bag to teach her daughter Harper about colors, mixing colors, and textures.



**Week
of the
Young
Child**



HIGHMARK.
WALK FOR A HEALTHY COMMUNITY
Highmark is an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

VIRTUAL HIGHMARK WALK | MAY 9 - JUNE 30

Like so many other events, the 2020 Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community scheduled for June 13th in Wilmington has been changed to an online only fundraiser and virtual walk. This provides the over 30 Delaware nonprofit organizations like St. Michael's who benefit from the annual event a way to safely participate and still raise funds.

That means you can still walk for and donate to St. Michael's from anywhere! A perfect reason to get outside and get walking. After all, June IS officially National Great Outdoors Month!

A virtual walk is a real walk, but it's on your terms. Anytime between May 9 and June 30, you choose where and when you walk (treadmill, park or trail, the neighborhood, etc.) — it's your choice! You pick your start and stop times. Also, this year, to keep up the momentum, the minimum amount needed to be raised in order to receive a free Highmark Walk t-shirt has been lowered to \$15 (previous amount \$30).

Join the St. Michael's Team and help us reach our goal of \$2,500!
Register or Donate Today: WalkForAHealthyCommunity.org

Beyond Stress Management

Dear Friends,

Unprecedented, enormously challenging, unparalleled, extraordinary, —words we typically use sparingly are commonplace these days. These times are all of those and more — frightening, threatening, surreal — and the list goes on. Stress management seems like such a benign term compared to the exhausting effort of keeping our heads above water during this tsunami of illness and death. What do we do? What helps when all seems so hopeless, overwhelming, and out of our control?



We need to think outside of ourselves, beyond management; we need to find purpose that is bigger than all the darkness. We need to be those helpers that Mr. Rogers urged children to watch for, to find when things look horrendously bad. These times are difficult in ways never

before experienced. 9/11, the Sandy Hook shootings, the Boston Marathon bombing were all horrific experiences which populations I cared deeply about reacted to, came together for, and brought out the best in each other. But those events were clearly delineated; people could stop, cry, breathe, hug, make plans, and move forward.

Today, it truly is a tsunami and it has not stopped; it has only stopped us from coming together with those hugs, sharing those tears. I urge you to stop, cry, breathe, call the people you want to hug, make plans, move forward, and above all else, reach out. Call an old childhood friend or send a funny YouTube video. Beat this monster at what is hurting us the most — not having human contact when it is needed the most.

One of my favorite people in the world was my uncle Red. He died when I was 16 and I am most grateful that I not only had his unconditional love for those 16

years, but I also was able to have some of those soul-searching adolescent conversations before he passed. My uncle had a degenerative spinal disease. By the time of his death, he had no muscle function, only uncontrollable spasms. I never heard him complain or curse; it was always "Okay, that's over. What's next?" I asked him once how he could do it — how he could not be angry or bitter. His answer was that the challenge was not his deteriorating body, but it was maintaining and strengthening his soul and that was a challenge he would answer.

While none of us chose this pandemic (another word we likely never considered becoming a daily term), we can choose how we respond to it - with grace, humor, and love for our fellow human beings.

Sending strong, loving thoughts your way,

Lucinda Ross

Lucinda Ross, M.Ed.
 Executive Director