



COMMITTED TO THE FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITY
ST. MICHAEL'S SCHOOL
RENOVATION AND EXPANSION PROJECT

700 N. Walnut Street
Wilmington, DE 19801-3514



INSIDE

- CONSTRUCTION ENTERS FINAL PHASE
- CAPITAL CAMPAIGN REACHES 83% OF GOAL
- NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH DELAWARE NATURE SOCIETY

See more renovation photos inside!
Below: The original school entrance becomes a community meeting room.

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OUR MISSION

St. Michael's is dedicated to building a strong foundations for all children in the first five years of life and to supporting families as their educational journey begins. We foster a safe, nurturing, inclusive environment and seek the highest standards in our practice, curriculum, and professionals.

We are committed to the community we serve and believe a sense of community is a core strength for children, families, and educators.



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the school SCOOP

SUMMER 2024



St. Michael's School RENOVATION AND EXPANSION PROJECT

A \$6.7 million campaign to increase our physical and programmatic footprint

Rep. Blunt Rochester Invests Federal Funding in Capital Improvements

We are thrilled to share that St. Michael's has been awarded \$1 million in Community Project Funding through a FY24 federal appropriations bill from Congresswoman Lisa Blunt Rochester in support of our capital renovations project. In April, Rep. Blunt Rochester visited to tour the facility, see the latest construction and visit with students.

Funding was made in coordination with U.S. Senators Tom Carper and Chris Coons and will be used for building upgrades, adding new classrooms and strengthening St. Michael's role as a community resource. We are extremely grateful for the wonderful support of and collaboration with Delaware's Congressional team. With this funding, St. Michael's has now reached \$5.5 million of the \$6.7 million needed to complete construction.



L to R: Rev. Dr. Stanley Hearst, III, Pastor, Bethel AME Church and St. Michael's Parent; Jack Stucker, Board President and St. Michael's Parent; Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester; Lucinda Ross, Executive Director; Susan Sherk, Past Board President and Capital Campaign Co-Chair.

Partnership with Nature Society Creates New Habitats

An exciting collaboration with the Delaware Nature Society (DNS) is introducing new natural habitats in St. Michael's 30,000 square feet of outdoor space – while also creating new teaching opportunities for our staff and children. The two entities connected last fall when a few St. Michael's staff attended a Monarch Migration event hosted by DNS at the Du Pont Environmental Education Center. Kerry Wilson, DNS' Habitat Outreach Coordinator, later visited St. Michael's to suggest ways to enhance our outdoor spaces and integrate lessons on nature and science into our curriculum.

Those initial conversations have evolved into what is now a comprehensive city-wide project to create and protect healthy habitats in Wilmington at St. Michael's and at several other schools and community organizations in the city. The project is funded through a grant from the Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund. At St. Michael's, Wilson is working with staff to install a pollinator garden, a food garden, native trees, a bug zone with tree stumps, a woodland fairy garden with native plants and flowering vines along the fences. "We are working to normalize nature for children", she explains. "When you create safe, green infrastructures that build trust with nature, it helps children to let go of the fear of things like bugs, bees, worms and beetles and to begin to have conversations about the world around them. **It's important for children to have this exposure and to understand that you can experience the impact of nature even in small, compact spaces in the city.**"



Wilson says St. Michael's school yard is the first in the city of its kind with several different types of habitats being layered in over time. In addition to the plantings, the DNS-led grant also provides gardening tools for students and adults, rain barrels, a compost pile and ongoing workshops and support for our staff on sustaining practices for the new habitats. *Many thanks to the Nature Society for their commitment to this important and beautiful initiative at St. Michael's and across our city!*

Left: Kerry Wilson, Habitat Outreach Coordinator at Delaware Nature Society, and Tannicka Johnson, St. Michael's Administrative Coordinator, plant new native trees on the playground.



HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THE PROJECT

- 1. GIFTS OF CASH:** Outright gifts or pledges with payments extended over a period of time are encouraged and the easiest way to support the campaign.
- 2. GIFTS OF ASSETS:** Gifts of stock or retirement plan contributions enable you to maximize your support while taking a tax deduction and minimizing your income taxes.
- 3. MATCHING GIFTS:** Many companies have matching gift programs for employee donations and volunteer efforts. Check with your Human Resources department to see if your support qualifies for a matching gift.
- 4. PLANNED GIFTS:** Bequests and other deferred giving vehicles such as Charitable Remainder Trusts enable you to support the campaign with potential tax benefits now.

NAMING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FACILITY AND OUTDOOR SPACES STILL EXIST!

Exciting Summer Ahead as Construction Continues

While the past two years have often been driven by the construction project and necessary accommodations, we are now looking forward to finishing the next major phase and moving into new and renovated classrooms this summer.

Our Kindergarten Readiness Program, which we informally call K-Camp, is ready to start as we move into our new pre-K classrooms. These are our final efforts to ready our rising kindergartners for some of the more logistical components before the big jump. Students combine classes into larger groups, learn the pledge of allegiance, and even take bus trips to some of their perspective new schools in order to conquer that first very tall step up!

"To have an environment which reflects the beauty and the value of what we do is an incredible gift."

tion for the next fall. For the child, the transition began long before.

Achieving third grade reading level does not begin in kindergarten. It begins with reading to children as infants, exploring books with toddlers, having conversations about stories with preschoolers — the daily practices at St. Michael's. We recognize that not all children have resources at home or families with the time and energy after a long day at work to provide these experiences; we value the hours we spend with our children. Life skills are developed through experiences and intentional teaching with these little ones in their classrooms and with their friends.

The transition to kindergarten is a huge step for every child and family. For the adults, this passage begins every November with kindergarten registra-

I am so very excited at how beautiful these facilities will be. **Our children, our families, and our staff all deserve these improved surroundings.** I never

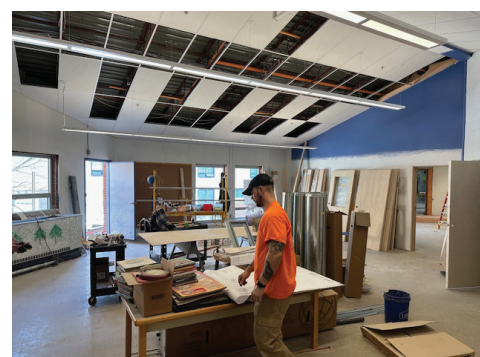
doubt the importance and the impact of the work of early childhood educators nor the foundational hope they are able to build.

To have an environment which reflects the beauty and the value of what we do is an incredible gift. **We sincerely appreciate all who are making this dream come true.** We ask that others continue to join in helping us reach our fundraising goal so we can complete the construction.

Thank you for your continued trust in and support of the work that we do. Please come visit for a tour!

Gratefully,

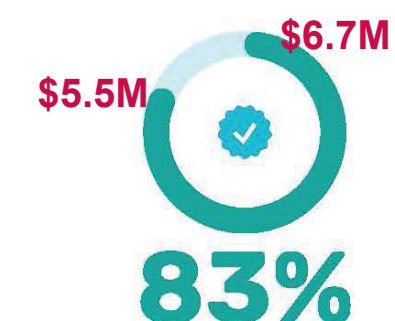
Lucinda Ross, M.Ed.
Executive Director



**January - May
2024
CONSTRUCTION**



Pictured: New classrooms and admin offices added on existing rooftops; Lobby renovations; and a new community meeting room facing E. 7th Street.



of our fundraising goal has been reached.

We're almost there!
Will you help us close the gap?

Thank You!