

SAVE
THE
DATE

FRIDAY,
FEBRUARY 21
5-7PM

DELAWARE
HISTORY
MUSEUM

CELEBRATE
BLACK HISTORY
MONTH AND
THE ROLE OF
EARLY
EDUCATION
IN WILMINGTON

COCKTAIL
HOUR
Q&A PANEL

Hosted by
St. Michael's School



ST. MICHAEL'S
SCHOOL AND NURSERY, INC.

700 N. Walnut Street
Wilmington, DE 19801-3514

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ST. MICHAEL'S
SCHOOL AND NURSERY, INC.



the school SCOOP

2019 FALL NEWSLETTER

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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
admin@stmichaelsde.org

StMichaelsSchoolAndNursery



Thank you for your investment that builds
a strong foundation for a child's success **now.**

HOW TO GIVE

MAIL	Use the enclosed envelope.
ONLINE	stmichaelsde.org
AMAZON.COM	smile.amazon.com Choose us as your charity.
SECC	secc.delaware.gov St. Michael's #70089
PLEDGE	Sponsor one child by committing to a multi-year gift.

It's Been a Busy Year!

Thank you for supporting St. Michael's through your time, donations and talents during the last year! Here are several highlights of what you have helped achieve:

We continued to expand our Infant Program after renovations in 2017 allowed room to triple the number enrolled for this population. This effort aligns with our Strategic Plan to create a steady enrollment for our Toddler and Pre-K Programs.

Fifteen students graduated from Pre-K and transitioned to public, private and charter schools throughout New Castle County.

School leadership was active on the advocacy front, pushing for greater investment in and support for quality early childhood programs. We received coverage in the *Delaware Business Times*, published Op-Eds on DelawareOnline and hosted several state and city political representatives.

Six teachers completed the Child Development Associate Credential™, the most



Aspiring young artist Samuel Arabia painted this beautiful mural for the wall in our Toddler Playground last summer. It brings so much color and joy! Thank you to Lee Kallos for facilitating this project.

widely recognized credential in early childhood education (ECE) and a key stepping stone in career advancement. Two teachers completed TECE 2 (Training in Early Care and Education). Four continue to take classes towards their Associates or Bachelors degree. Staff also benefitted from the state's T.E.A.C.H. and Wage\$ programs which provide scholarships and compensation for those working in licensed programs and

who are pursuing formal ECE education.

As a participating organization, we hosted the kickoff event for the "Get Delaware Reading-Wilmington" initiative, part of the Move the Needle collaboration between the United Way of Delaware, Nemours, the Delaware Association for the Education of Young Children and over 10 other community partners. The program provides children ages 4 and 5, their teachers and families with a curriculum and comprehensive package of support services designed to help city of Wilmington students become grade-level readers by the end of 3rd grade.

Through the "Partnering with Parents" grant from Prevent Child Abuse Delaware, St. Michael's continued to encourage family involvement. We offered over 15 family activities and trainings to build school community, strengthen the family unit and develop peer-to-peer parent bonds. We also held our first "St. Michael's Family Fun Day at the Blue Rocks" thanks to generous sponsors.

ST. MICHAEL'S NEW WEBSITE WINS AFP COMMUNICATIONS AWARD

St. Michael's was honored to receive a "Fundraising and Communications Excellence Award" for its new website from the AFP (Association of Fundraising Professionals) Brandywine Chapter at the 2019 Philanthropy Day on November 12th at the DuPont Country Club. A BIG THANK YOU to the team at Squatch Creative for the outstanding redesign of our site!

Check it out! www.stmichaelsde.org

UNIVERSAL PRE-K

St. Michael's School is a proud member of the First State Pre-K campaign. In partnership with 60+ Delaware organizations, we are committed to advocating for every child in Delaware to have access to a high-quality, voluntary, universal pre-K program in mixed delivery settings.

DELAWARE IS RANKED 38TH IN THE NATION IN PRE-K ACCESS AND 41ST WHEN YOU ADD HEAD START AND SPECIAL EDUCATION.

We are prepared to work with First State Pre-K and its supporters across the state to make this goal a reality and hope you will join us! You can get involved by:

- o Signing the First State Pre-K petition
- o Subscribing to the First State Pre-K email newsletter
- o Liking First State Pre-K on Facebook and Following First State Pre-K on Twitter

You can do all of these or learn more here: www.firststateprek.com

Please send your questions to: firststateprek@gmail.com

FIRST STATE
Pre-K



Thank you to all the walkers and supporters of this year's Highmark Walk! We had over 80 walkers - a new record - and met our fundraising goal of \$5,000!

These generous sponsors supported our first 'Family Fun Day at the Blue Rocks':

HOME RUN SPONSOR
Centimark Corporation

TRIPLE SPONSORS
Harvey Hanna
Vandemark & Lynch

DOUBLE SPONSORS
Blue Valor Consulting Services
City of Wilmington
Greenway Commerical Cleaning
Richards, Layton & Finger
Wawa



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



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT | TIARA CARTER

"I attended St. Michael's School at age 2 and 3 in the mid 1990's. Even at that age, I distinctly remember the blue front doors, the library and the layout of my classroom. My mom attended St. Michael's and now my two children, Cameron and Brooklyn, are enrolled. I even had the same classroom that Cameron has now on the lower level! **It is important to me to have my children at St. Michael's because I value the strong academic focus, the diversity and the low student-teacher ratios.** St. Michael's is also convenient to Del Tech where I'm currently studying Nursing."

Are you or someone you know a St. Michael's alum? We want to hear from you! Email us at admin@stmichaelsde.org or call 302-656-3389.

Why Advocacy is So Important Now

The Perfect Storm is Racing Towards Our Youngest Citizens

Dear Friends,

I have been in the early childhood profession for over 30 years; both my undergraduate and graduate degrees focused on the development of young children. I continue to be fascinated, delighted, and sometimes concerned for the little ones I see daily at St. Michael's; they inspire me and constantly remind me of the responsibility we all need to hold for their well-being and for their lives' trajectories.



Many of us in early childhood education were very excited when brain research began to confirm what we had known throughout our studies and practice; even the youngest learn through interactions with their environments and the people around them.

High quality early learning is expensive. Low teacher-to-children ratios, vast amounts of consumable goods, constant updates on environments and equipment all create the highest overhead of a child's education — yet this stage of their school-

ing receives the least funding and, consequently, both early learning centers and families struggle.

It has been well-documented that teachers with degrees are the most important aspect of quality in early care, yet few centers can afford to pay competitive and fair salaries. As a result, the pipeline of teachers who are willing to hold onto their passion and sacrifice their personal viability is understandably becoming smaller.

We all should be alarmed. Not only are children's experiences compromised, but what will happen to our economy if there are not enough teachers to staff centers?

Early childhood is where it all begins — ensuring 3rd grade reading level, cultivating thoughtful, committed citizens, and supporting families in their pursuit for productive lives. It is all connected. Quality care should be available to all children and families without financially crippling them. That is true equity.

Other states have been expanding access to state-funded early learning — with community-based providers as partners — giving us plenty of successful blueprints to follow. A full school day with

wrap-around care would enable families to continue in the work force as well as offer community and private providers the ability to hire trained teachers at fair wages. This has been St. Michael's mission for nearly 130 years, but the benchmarks of quality learning have been refined and re-established and come with significantly more expense.

QUALITY CARE SHOULD BE AVAILABLE TO ALL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WITHOUT FINANCIALLY CRIPPLING THEM. THAT IS TRUE EQUITY.

These are all reasons I am supporting First State Pre-K, a statewide non-partisan group of over 60 organizations urging policymakers to enact high quality universal early education in mixed settings — community-based providers, center-based programs, Head Start, and public schools.

It all starts here — equity, hope, futures. The research and numbers are sound. Where is the logic in repairing the damage as opposed to building stronger foundations that offer hope, resilience, and the skills needed for successful lives?

Lucinda Ross, M.Ed.
Executive Director