

# Playful Connections

Graduation is a time to celebrate our students, particularly the seniors who are headed to new challenges and opportunities far and near. When I think of these graduates, and the skills they will be taking with them, I think of two that I believe were essential to their success here, and will be essential to their success beyond Saint George's — the power of play and the power of connection.

This year's graduates have an enormous capacity for play. They brought us Techno Thursdays, Hallway Olympics, the Harry Potter Club, and the Soul Crew — all ways to play in and out of school.

They bring their massive imaginations to their play: skits and films for classroom projects, crazy unique pieces for ceramics, colorful wild designs in art. They are really into the outdoors, and the outdoors naturally brings out play. They backpack, mountain bike, wakeboard, and ski — from the backcountry to the terrain park — and they love being out on the campus, which is packed with opportunities to play. They have enjoyed sixth grade special places, swimming in and canoeing on the river, climbing on Dragon Crag, running on the trails, barbequing on the field.

Play allows them to knock shoulders with each other — to get to know one another — so play leads to connection, their second essential skill. A lot of these students have worked and played together for years, and they have enormous respect for each other's talent and work. They come to each other's shows, cheer from the stands and cook burgers at the ball games. Their true interaction and connection goes beyond expected niceties or social networking.

They can be blunt, direct and honest — telling each other what they think and what they feel. They do this in the classroom, on the bus, in the senior lounge, during practice. They take each other on, they debate, they make a case, they change their minds, they

construct an argument. Their favorite classes are where they can articulate their own point of view — history, English, International Relations.

Creating authentic connection by speaking genuinely takes time, takes trust, and takes space — emotional and temporal. It requires saying what they mean, wrestling with ideas and emotions, and then determining enough of a shared vision to move forward.

We as a community need to hone these skills as well — developing a sense of play and of connection that comes from authentic interaction. My hope is that as they depart, these seniors will leave behind that wonderful part of their legacy and spirit.

– Mo Copeland, Head of School



## SGS Board Report – Celebrations

The magazine this month is full of pictures and stories about celebrations at the school. I participated in many celebrations, both as Board President and as the proud Mom of a graduating senior. I watched some truly amazing performances by students and teachers and heard testimonials that spoke to the level of deep affection and respect which exists between both. These celebrations truly helped to crystalize for me all that is wonderful about this school. They remind me of why I have volunteered here over the past eight years. Special things happen at Saint George's, not just at the end of the school year, but all year long.

With a graduating senior, our family life at the school is over. And my term as Board President is over as well. It is hard to leave this wonderful school. But my son is now an accomplished and

confident young man eager to begin his college career. He leaves behind lifelong friends and, in his words, “the best teachers of my life.” His memories of his time at the school are happy and bright and filled with many, many highlights. I feel the same way. We celebrate the school and are so thankful to have been a part of the SGS community for so many years.

A new President, Mark Ostersmith, has been elected by the Board. He will carry on the work we began on strategic planning, enrollment, fundraising, and, of course, the budget. I wish him and the Board well as they work on these difficult issues. I also hope that they will have a chance to participate in future celebrations at the school, as these occasions serve to remind us of what the work is all about.

– Wendy Start, Outgoing President, SGS Board of Trustees