



Opening of School Letter, 2018

Dear Parents and Friends of Saint James School,

I write to give you a brief report on summer projects and on our preparations for the opening of school later this month.

Happily, we had only one teacher leave at the end of last year and one full time administrator: Whitney Holmes, who taught Chemistry, lived in Holloway, and coached girls' lacrosse, and Amelia Fitzsimmons, who was the Associate Director of Enrollment Management and directed the dance program. We also lost Dan Prete who was our varsity boys' basketball coach. We therefore had only two full-time and a part-time position to fill, and we added an additional teaching/dorm/coaching position in Spanish and Math.

Lauren Lewis joins us as the Senior Associate Director of Enrollment Management. She has over ten years independent school admissions experience and was most recently the Director of Admissions and Financial Aid at the Tatnall School in Wilmington, Delaware. Coming to Saint James gives her the opportunity to return to a boarding school and to her native Maryland; she is also excited to be part of a faith-based community. She has a BS in Sociology from Towson University and a Master of Social Work from Barry University in Miami, so she is wonderfully qualified to live in Coors Dormitory.

We also welcome **Anthony Puca**, who has a BS in Mathematical Economics and a BA in Spanish from Gettysburg College, where he was a four year varsity wrestler, captain of the wrestling team, and president of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. He will be teaching two sections each of Spanish I and Geometry, coaching wrestling and lacrosse, and living on Maddox Hall in Claggett Dormitory. **Molly Billings** comes to us from the Alzar School in Cascade, Idaho, where she had an internship in Chemistry and served in the residential life program; she also spent three summers leading wilderness trips at a girls' camp in Maine. She has a BA in Chemistry with a minor in Environmental Studies from the College of Wooster in Ohio, where she gained classroom experience in three Wooster schools: a public middle school, a Montessori school, and a nursery school. She will be teaching four sections of Chemistry, coaching cross country, and living in Onderdonk.

Finally, **Kevin Breslin** comes to us from the Fast Break Basketball Club in Singapore, where he coached 16 different teams throughout Southeast Asia, China, and Australia. A graduate of St. Maria Goretti, where he was their 6th all-time leading scorer, and Washington College, where he played four years on their varsity team and earned a BA and MA in English. He also served as an assistant boys' varsity basketball coach at Washington College and at Johns Hopkins University. Kevin will be our head boys' basketball coach, run our conditioning program, and serve as an assistant director in the Athletics Department.

The big news is that Onderdonk will be the youngest girls' dorm this year in response to a welcome increase in our girls' boarding enrollment. To this end, the dorm has been renovated this summer, and Katherine Proctor is moving in from Coors to serve as the dorm head. We have also finished the renovation of Old Orchard House, where Scott and Alice Barr now reside and look forward to entertaining, and the Annex next door, where Robert Harry is now happily settled.

Ben Heebner will serve as the dorm head in Claggett as Steve Lachut will move to the townhouse in Coors when he marries Molly Goolman in the Chapel on October 13. (It will be my honor to marry them, and it promises to be a joyful wedding.) Cody Pillow will serve as the dorm head in Mattingly, as Abbey Quinn has moved to Bonner House with her growing family. So far, we have two new summer babies on campus, Becket Zawie and Harper Quinn, who join David Keyes who was born last fall, and we are still awaiting the arrival of one more in the Ruiz-Rocha family. Alex Gould has moved to Claggett III and Camillo Fiore has moved to Mattingly.

As I write this letter, the construction crew is hard at work on the new Pohanka Fine Arts Center, and the walls are now rising from the foundation. We were delayed by the heavy rains this spring and then again earlier this month, but we are moving now. We have also received exciting leadership pledges for the new Turner Athletics Center from Jim and Toni Turner, the Thornedge Foundation, and Geoff and Anne Pohanka, which means that we can proceed with the final design and bidding process, in the hope that we can begin construction next spring. We are still looking for additional support for both buildings, and there are several important naming opportunities still available, so please do not hesitate to give me a call. God loves a joyful giver, and these buildings are essential to the quality of our work here and to our future as a school.

Because of the rain, the campus looks like England, but with the heat and humidity of Burma. There is a wonderful confluence of bulldozers, lawnmowers, and strollers, but the campus still feels empty to me, as we are never really Saint James until the students arrive, which they will – in a week!

Yours faithfully,