

Young Vic Celebrates 50 Years!

**Pool
Update**

**4th of July
Festivities Return!**

St. David's Day School

Charm

By Kate Culotta

Walking along Roland Avenue on any given weekday in

the vicinity of St. David's Church, you'll hear the cheerful shouts and merry laughter of young children. If you peek over the wall on the north side of the church, which is located at 4700 Roland Avenue, you'll see them playing on the playground under the watchful eye of their teachers.

It was an unusually warm April day when I arrived to take photographs of Margie Szymkiewicz's kindergarten class. Just a few days before Easter break, several children were away on family trips, but those outside that day were making the most of the sunny weather. How lucky we are, I thought, to have St. David's Day School in our community.

St. David's Church has a long history here. The first local Episcopal church, St. Mary's, was founded in Hampden at the end of the 1890s, when Roland Park was in its infancy. By 1906, Roland Park had grown to the size that church members living in the neighborhood decided they needed a church of their own within walking distance. Its first service was Palm Sunday in 1907. The congregation grew quickly, with strong attendance at both church services and Sunday school classes. By 1927, the church's north extension was added so that Sunday school classes could move from a shared space in the Great Hall into classrooms. There was another expansion in 1956, when more classrooms, multipurpose rooms and the Alston Lounge were added.

Doratheia Smith arrived in 1957 as director of the church's new day school. For 65 years now, many local two-year-olds have had their first school experience at St. David's, where they learned to read, practiced basic math skills, made life-long friends, and went on to academic success at local public and private schools.

Lucy Zouck, St. David's Day School director from 1996 to 2018, introduced new programs and services. Extended care time was lengthened, science and Spanish were added to the kindergarten curriculum, and afterschool programs were offered. Zouck also started the school's on-site library, which was initially funded by the parents' association and continues to be supported through a "Birthday Book" program.

When I asked Szymkiewicz, a kindergarten teacher with 14 years of experience at St. David's, what she loved most about the school, she replied "With our small class size, I am able to meet every child where they are developmentally and help them grow to their full potential. I love our enriching reading and writing program, and hands-on math and science lessons. Our curriculum also includes Spanish and robotics, as well as art, music and gym."

Donna Avila, current school director, echoed those same thoughts. "We have children who happily run into school in the morning forgetting to say goodbye to their parents, and then they don't want to leave at the end of the day. Our small size and low student-to-teacher ratio allows for rich relationships between our children and between our children and teachers."

She continued, "We hear all the time from the schools in the area that our St. David's children are so well prepared for school."



St. David's Day School 1st graders (pictured left to right) Chloe Bruns, Julian Thomas, Kieran Nook, Thomas Chen, Brinley Graves, Noah Kao and Arianna Rotondo. Photo: Kate Culotta

Over the past two years, Roland Park has seen a very high rate of home ownership turnover, bringing many families with young children into the area. St. David's welcomes families with children from age two to five (including those who turn five by the end of December), making it clear that the school is open to children of all faiths. St. David's offers a wonderful, wholesome beginning for our youngest members to start on their educational path. **V**

The mission of St. David's Day School (stdavidsdayschool.net) is to nurture children, to encourage their innate enthusiasm for learning, and to help them become ready for the school years ahead through individual attention to all the facets of early growth and development: intellectual, emotional, spiritual, social and physical. Additional information about specific programs, class demographics and sizes, and tuition and tuition assistance programs can be found on the website at or by calling 410-366-2133.



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