



St. Mark's Episcopal Church Rector, Rev. David Gibbons, reads a story to St. Mark's Day School students in the chapel. Day School Director Maggie Sandford is on the right.



Teachers Heather Eade (on left) and Linda Cory with some of their 5-year-old students. Next year, this class will be called Junior Kindergarten.

Playing with a Purpose

FOR MORE THAN 45 YEARS, ST. MARK'S DAY SCHOOL HAS ENRICHED THE LIVES OF ITS STUDENTS AS WELL AS THE FAMILIES WHOSE CHILDREN ATTEND. A LONG-STANDING TRADITION IN THE GREATER BARRINGTON AREA, ST. MARK'S OFFERS PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS FROM AGES TWO TO SIX YEARS OLD. *QUINTESSENTIAL BARRINGTON* ASKED THE DAY SCHOOL DIRECTOR, MAGGIE SANDFORD, TO SHARE HER FIRST IMPRESSION OF THE SCHOOL AND TO TALK ABOUT THE SCHOOL'S TEACHING PHILOSOPHY.

THE MOMENT I WALKED INTO ST. MARK'S to interview for the Preschool Director's position, I thought to myself, "even if I don't get this job, this is where I want Bruce (my then 1-year-old son) to experience school for the first time." St. Mark's Day School in Barrington Hills is a home away from home for local preschoolers. A bit off the beaten path from the bustling town where I grew up, the school is fittingly surrounded by the whimsical, yet calming, countryside. And reflecting its natural environs, the preschool similarly exudes a palpable feeling of curiosity and comfort,

both tranquil and exciting. One needs to look no further than the colorful artwork that lines the halls, coupled with the carefully organized classrooms, to know that St. Mark's has somehow struck that rare and often elusive balance of order and exploration that inherently stimulates young learners.

In my first year as director, I've learned that the preschool's captivating atmosphere is most notably a product of the dedicated people who daily contribute to our success and continued growth. It all starts with our families, whose loyalty and support has afforded us the great privilege of playing a foundational role in preparing our community's littlest citizens for growth and success. We are proud to say that for many of our families, attending St. Mark's Day School has now become a tradition spanning generations. With these strong and lasting relationships, St. Mark's has been able to grow and evolve over the past 50 years, and it is only a matter of time before the St. Mark's tradition spans three generations.

EXCEPTIONAL TEACHERS

Working in concert with our outstanding families is our exceptional staff of teachers. It is our goal to form a partnership with each family, to appreciate the uniqueness of each child, and to tailor an early

learning experience that inspires a lifelong love of learning in each of our students. St. Mark's understands that each child has different needs, rates of growth, and interests. We aim to provide each of our students with what he or she needs to be successful, while providing families a supportive relationship that allows their children to flourish socially, emotionally, physically, as well as academically.

During the preschool years there is a giant boom in development. Each day children between the ages of two and five learn something new. As Jean Piaget said, "Play is the work of childhood," and our

St. Mark's Mission and Philosophy

Our Mission: We challenge children to discover their uniqueness, foster in children the joy of life-long learning, and provide a family centered experience where parents and teachers partner to nurture each child's potential.

Our Philosophy: At St. Mark's we, like Jean Piaget, believe that play is the work of childhood. Each day we aim to provide our young learners with opportunities to learn through play-based activities. We strive to reach each student socially, emotionally, and academically to help them grow into well-rounded individuals. It is our goal to facilitate the learning of our students with a caring heart and an open mind. We know that each child is unique, and we partner with families to provide each and every child with what they need to succeed.



Teachers Kim Green (on left) and Heidi Doyle with some of their 4-year-old preschool students.

teachers work tirelessly to provide students with engaging, hands-on opportunities to learn, explore, and discover the world around them. And we have spent this past year reaffirming our dedication to continually evolving our practices to meet the needs of our ever-changing world.

This past fall, we challenged our talented group of teachers to tackle something new: The Project Approach. Using this teaching strategy, all of St. Mark's delved into the world of trains for the entire month of January. We took a whole-school field trip to see and explore the Lake County Model Railway Club; we played in a dramatic play train station; and we hosted an Open House to share all we learned with our families. It was amazing to see the breadth of variation and distinctiveness in how each of our students engaged with the topic.

Most important, St. Mark's is a community that works hard to foster independence and self-esteem in all our young learners. When I think about what I want most for my son as he begins his time in school, more than anything I want him to feel empowered to learn, that he is capable, and that with hard work and persistence anything is possible. At St. Mark's, I know that these values will be instilled in him. I know that he will be curious, creative, and loved. And when Bruce steps through our Day School doors in a few months, I know that he will be home. 

Day School Enrollment Information

Enrollment for 2018-2019 is now open. For more information, or to schedule a tour, contact the office at 847-381-9172 or visit the school's website at www.mydayschool.org.



Maggie Tinkoff was born and raised in Barrington. After attending Barrington 220 schools for her entire early education career, she attended the University of Illinois for her Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education and Master's Degree in Early Childhood Special Education. She spent her first five years out of school teaching in a plethora of environments. Her teaching career provided her with experiences in preschool, first, and third grade, working in traditional education, special education, and gifted education. Now Maggie Sandford, she became the director of St. Mark's Day School last June and is pursuing her EdD in Early Childhood Education Leadership. She lives in Palatine with her husband and 2-year-old son.