

# SAINT MARY'S SCHOOL

## Alumnae Profile

### Meredith Miller '12

Kindergarten Teacher  
The Hewitt School

#### ***When Life Comes Full Circle***

Meredith Miller '12 is not only a graduate of an all-girls' school, she's also now a teacher at one. For Meredith, educating girls is personal.

"Saint Mary's helped me feel more confident in the classroom because of its single sex environment and small class sizes. Now as an educator myself, I can provide that same comfortable space for girls to build their own confidence," she says.

#### ***The Beginning of a Journey***

Meredith felt safe to explore opportunities, develop her interests, and discover her talent of working with children while at Saint Mary's. Arriving in the fall of 2008 after completing 8<sup>th</sup> grade at Trinity Episcopal School in Charlotte, she says she found a "comfortable environment" at 900 Hillsborough Street, which helped nurture her natural abilities with children.

"As a boarding student, I was around residential families who were raising their kids, and we lived side-by-side. I would hang out and play with the younger children after dinner on the soccer field or in the hallways of Penick, Cruikshank, or Smedes," she explains.

As a student, she grew in confidence and built on her classroom experiences, as well as those she had as a student athlete. Meredith played Field Hockey in both her freshman and sophomore years, ran Track all four years, and during the winter season participated in Elementary Dance Class. Later, as a junior and senior, she was a Prefect and then a Marshal.

"Being on-dorm at Saint Mary's exposed me to working with kids at a younger age, and it was here that I took my AP Psychology class. The curriculum allowed me to study brain development and why we do the things we do. I was very interested in that and in how children learn and grow."

After Saint Mary's, Meredith enrolled at Sewanee, a world-class liberal arts college where she majored in Psychology and minored in Education. After finishing her bachelor's degree, she went to work as a teacher for *Teach for America*, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to partner educators with teaching opportunities in low-income school districts.

#### ***Finding the Right Path Forward***

After a short time, Meredith's heart began calling her to find a position in an independent or private school setting like she'd had at Saint Mary's. During her senior year, she'd started a relationship with Educators Ally, a company that connects teachers and administrators with independent day and boarding schools. After relocating to New York City to be near her family, the firm began submitting Meredith's resume across town. Very quickly, she was asked to interview at three separate independent schools. Not surprisingly, she was offered all three positions and had to decide what path was the right one forward.

Reflecting on the interview process, the people she engaged with, and the community she'd met, she accepted a position as a Kindergarten Teacher at The Hewitt School (THS), an independent, K-12 girls school. The move to New York allowed her to see her parents at least once a week and to be near her older sister who was living in Brooklyn. She also found that teaching in an all-girls environment was as rewarding for her as much as for her students.

"They teach me every day," she says. "Growing up in New York City is very different from growing up in Charlotte, and I'm learning a lot from them. I also identify with their families and have made wonderful connections to parents and the community here."

This summer, Meredith will complete her second year at THS. She's also currently working to complete her master's degree in early childhood education at Bank Street College (BSC), and she just learned she's been promoted from Kindergarten Associate Teacher to First Grade. BSC allowed her to do her placement work at THS and have supported her as a working teacher with classes and programs that fit her availability.



### *Staying Connected*

With a full-time job and school work, Meredith still finds time to keep up with her Saint Mary's friends. In fact, she, Carrie Coleman '12, Mary Davis '12, Elizabeth Martin '12, and Jeannette Oakes '12 recently visited the west coast together and went to Joshua Tree with their LA-based friends. In three years, they and others in their class hope to have a big showing at Reunion Weekend 2022 to add some new memories to their Saint Mary's story.

In addition to staying connected to her alma mater in this way, she and her family also support Saint Mary's with gifts to the Annual Fund. They want to ensure today's Saint Mary's girls are offered the same broad base of experiences and activities that help them become well-rounded young women ready to take on the world.

To our current students, she offers some sage advice.

"A lot the time, your plan may not work out. But, what comes next is probably even better than what you had envisioned," she says. "It can be stressful and hard to imagine something better when you're in the midst of things not happening the way you wanted them to. Have faith: something good always happens to Saint Mary's girls."

Meredith also suggests building on your alumnae friendships and networking with graduates from all decades to make the most of opportunities for internships, your career, and for building a network of support to take advantage of mentoring available by the women who've come before you.

Meredith certainly embodies the spirit of Saint Mary's graduates. As she broadens the base of students she teaches, we know she's carrying on an alumnae legacy that has been 177 years in the making, and we can't wait to see what the future holds for her and the community she impacts daily.

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