



SAINT ANN'S SCHOOL

August 2016

Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests.
I'll dig with it.

Seamus Heaney

Dear Saint Ann's Colleagues and Families,

The calendar has turned to August, and September gallops toward us. A new school year beckons us as we complete the summer tasks that make us ready: student schedules crafted, directories printed, shelves and walls and cubbies freshly painted, books read in eager anticipation of winter conversations. Pens in our fingers, we are ready to compose the next chapter, its content known only in its broadest outline.

For those inhabiting the Bosworth Building and for once and future occupants of the townhouses at 122/124 Pierrepoint Street, we'll return to a scene of both substantial progress and ongoing construction. Because as I write this letter in early August there is still much that is in flux. I will share more details about the state of this project in early September, but enough is known now to say that we will draw on our reserves of patience and good will as we continue to build a ship in the bottle that is our beloved old buildings!

I also expect this year to see a continuation of conversations amongst teachers and students about how we can continue to educate children in ways that reinforce our sense of a universal humanity, that sustain joyful encounters with a shared storehouse of knowledge, and that simultaneously acknowledge the challenges and delights of living in a community as diverse as ours. All of these aspirations are part of our mission. In 1972 Stanley Bosworth wrote that "St. Ann's Episcopal School opened seven years ago with two overriding commitments: to develop an outstanding education for children with outstanding potential and to maintain a diversified student body reflecting the heterogeneity of the New York City community." These tasks are as urgent and compelling now as they were at the school's founding, and even as we see daily evidence of how they can be mutually reinforcing we begin the year with an honest recognition that they can also exist in some tension with one another. Each day will challenge us to sustain our fierce commitment to the free and open exchange of ideas, to guide children in their encounters with difficult texts, topics and ideas, even as we heighten our awareness of the obligations we undertake in sustaining the diverse community that is our school. We begin this year with a sharper recognition that the worlds our students inhabit can differ vastly from one to the next, though they attend the same school, share the same prodigious talents, and live perhaps no more than a few miles apart.

I begin the year confident that through the art we create, the disciplines we explore, the love that we have for our students we will bring something new into the world. We should settle for nothing less, no matter how much digging is required.

Love,