

FULL STEAM AHEAD

Imagine being a teenager and coming into class to build a robot. Imagine sitting in graphic design class and creating a logo for your own personal brand. Imagine using 3D modeling software to fabricate your own 3D printed clock.

At SJP students don't have to imagine doing these activities, it is their daily experience in the school's many project-based classes. In their Studio Art, Design and STEAM classes, students go beyond the core curriculum taught in their conventional coursework and are able to explore their inner artist, engineer, and inventor. They engage with interesting problems and design their own unique solutions. They work collaboratively in design teams to complete tasks. They are active participants in their learning, not passive consumers of information.

The STEAM classes at SJP are integrative experiences that force students to consider problems through multiple lenses and from a variety of academic perspectives. By design, the classes are hands-on courses that give students exposure to real-life problems where there is no one correct answer, there is just their answer. Under the tutelage of SJP's STEAM department, students are encouraged to take risks and experiment with new ideas while applying the knowledge that they have learned in other classes and strengthening their critical thinking and collaboration skills.

Each year, the STEAM department devises unique experiences for the students to grapple with. This past year, in **Mr. Glozzy's** Fine Art classes, students were challenged to broaden their horizon beyond drawing and painting. They were asked to construct wooden and wire sculptures, make found object assemblages, design mosaics and build 3D Botanical forms. In **Mr. Shiner's** Graphic Design class they created graphic self portraits and learned about typography while developing their own fonts and word art. **Ms. Gipson** had her students exploring a variety of different topics through the lens of STEAM including cryptography, architecture, robotics and photography. While **Mr. Tice** had his seniors using Adobe AutoCAD to design their own floor plans and make a 3D rendering of the CAD teaching space.

For those students not enrolled in a STEAM class, the STEAM mentality extends well beyond the classroom experiences. In the fall play, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, and spring

musical, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, both directed by **Ms. Griffith**, the students were not merely actors following the director's lead, but co-producers in the world that they were creating, influencing the sight, sound and look of the play. The student a cappella group, directed by Mr. Shiner, works hard to master the complicated harmonies and rhythms in time for monthly and other special performances. And the SJP Robotics Team, coached by Ms. Gipson, runs like a mini tech company with students functioning as the programming and mechanical leads, as well as running the business side of the organization.

At the end of the year, the students showcased their work in the spring *STEAM show*. Joining all of the great work that featured a diverse portfolio of art, including work from our Studio Art, CAD (Computer-Aided Design), and Graphic Design classes; musical performances by the a cappella group and the Phoenix Players; projects drawn from our Sophomore STEAM curriculum, and the SJP robotics team all of which celebrate the "creativity and ingenuity of the students."

Regardless of where STEAM is found on the SJP campus, our students are deeply engaged in their learning and crafting their own unique experiences.



Above: STEAM teacher and Robotics Team mentor, Nia Gipson, offers a lesson in the innovative and colorful STEAM Lab. **Facing Page:** Students, faculty, friends and family gather in Phoenix Hall for the 2017 STEAM Show where works of art and innovation were on display during the month of May.

