

# A FAMILY OF ENGINEERS AND ARTISTS

***“Robotics is really hard and sometimes you feel like giving up, but at the same time, you can’t imagine your life without it. This team is the reason I don’t mind a long commute to and from school every day. The Firebirds have become a second family to me over the past four years and I don’t want it to end.”*** – Carly Sacco ’19

In 2012, when Saint Joseph Prep first opened its doors and initiated a new STEM curriculum, the School was navigating largely uncharted waters. Very few schools had implemented a 1:1 device program, so SJP’s students and teachers were pioneers in leveraging the power of educational technology with iPads. Additionally, what began as a supplemental STEM class in the 9th grade to strengthen students’ English and Math skills eventually transformed into two separate classes: English Writing for freshmen and STEAM II for sophomores.

The transition from STEM to STEAM represented an integration of the Arts. After all, building a robot or constructing a sustainable worship space starts with design. While the School had a visual arts program in place with talented and creative students producing outstanding work, a conscious decision was made to join these disparate and yet related disciplines.

This past year continued the growth and development of SJP’s forward-thinking program. In many ways, STEAM is situated at the very heart of the School’s four pillars: Academic Excellence, Authentic Community, Meaningful Engagement,

and Dynamic Innovation. It is a focus that drives academic achievement, brings students and faculty together with external partners, provides fun and experiential opportunities, and exists on the frontier of technology.

The department’s diverse portfolio of discovery and expression was on full display at the Annual STEAM Show on May 17. Featuring works from the various Studio Arts classes as well as Graphic Design, Computer-Aided Design, STEAM II, and Mechatronics, this year’s theme, “Reflect,” included powerful visual portraits, an amazing laser show, technical drawings, and elements from an Escape Room project.

On stage, The Phoenix Players, SJP’s drama collective, delivered two outstanding productions. In the fall, *You Can’t Take It with You* received great acclaim from attendees. Starring as Alice Sycamore, **Felicia Monteiro ’21** gushed, “The best was having fun with the cast backstage and getting closer to everyone I didn’t know before.”

Ms. Nia Gipson, one of the play’s co-directors, reinforced the community feel, saying, “It’s amazing to watch them give each other high-fives when they nail a line or remember a cue.”

In late March, the Players performed the hit musical, *A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder*, and took the family theme rather literally. Sisters **Sophia ’19** and **Annabelle Pappas ’22** joined sisters **Gabriella ’19** and **Marina Ribeiro ’22** as part of a cast that sang and danced to the delight of all attendees.

***“It was really fun acting alongside my sister. It was great to spend time with her and I felt more comfortable in my role. She helped me go through our lines and was really supportive.”*** – Annabelle Pappas ’22

Finally, the spirit of Saint Joseph Prep and its wonderfully affirming family was evident at the return of the School’s Talent Show. Organized by Student Council, the event provided SJP’s performers with an outlet to showcase their many skills and talents. “Dance is a huge passion of mine, but it’s not something I am able to show often in school,” noted **Madison Murphy ’19**. “Opportunities like this really give me the chance to share my passion with the SJP community.”



**Opposite page:** The SJP Robotics team wait among their competitors for the battle of the day. **Top:** Senior artists Jingyi Wang, Aleksandra Christie, Sophia Pappas, and Junyi Yan working on pieces for the STEAM Show. **Middle:** Cast members perform a dramatic conclusion to the spring musical. **Bottom:** Chuning Gao ’19 offers a powerful singing performance at the student-led talent show.

