

The Sagemont School Celebrates 20 Years of Success

BY STACEY BOMSER



Sagemont students enjoyed a 20th Anniversary celebration.



Erica Merlino won a Best Actress Cappie for her role as Helen Keller in *The Miracle Worker*.



The Sagemont Lions Boys Varsity Basketball Team holds several State titles.

The Sagemont School is celebrating a major milestone this year – 20 years of success as an academic institution. From its beginning as a private elementary school through its development into a top-ranked college-preparatory school, the school has continually grown and expanded to meet the academic, athletic and artistic needs of its students for today and well into the future.

“Back in 1996, when Weston was being flooded with new families with children, it was clear that this community could support and would have interest in a quality college-preparatory school,” states Lower School Campus Principal Monica Vigna. “The original plan was to provide a pre-K through fifth grade school but after the first year, the core families were asking the owners to consider providing an experience that would go through 12th grade.”

Today, The Sagemont School serves a student body of over 700 students on two campuses, and boasts the infrastructure and amenities to rival any school. The original campus, which is now known as the Lower School Campus serving students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade, boasts a swimming pool and athletic dome. The Upper School Campus, for middle and high school students, is home to the Sagemont Athletic Center, an NBA-quality practice facility. Last year, the Sagemont Performing Arts Center was added on the Upper School Campus to enhance the school’s award-winning performing and fine arts programs. This addition includes state-of-the-art music studios, art studios, and a 150-seat black box theater. Sagemont’s newest project was recently unveiled – the STEAM Innovation Lab, located in the Library and Technology Center on the Lower School Campus.

“Our students are really enjoying their hands-on science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics (STEAM) activities,” shares Principal Vigna. “In the Innovation Lab, student success is measured using the 4 C’s: communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking.”

The Sagemont Upper School Campus has embraced technology since it first opened its doors. “Laptops/Tablets are an integral part of the learning experience at Sagemont. Our curriculum is primarily delivered through digital textbooks, and technology is infused throughout to enhance students’ learning experiences,” notes Gayle Iacono, Upper School Campus Principal. “Wireless access to the school’s network anywhere on campus promotes the ‘anywhere, anytime learning.’

Furthermore, this ensures our students are prepared for any digital learning experiences they encounter in college.”

As a college-preparatory school, Sagemont is committed to preparing its students for the rigorous demands of college or university. Sagemont graduates are sought after by the finest institutions in the country, including Harvard, Cornell, Columbia, Purdue, Duke, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point,

and everywhere in between, including all Florida schools. Sagemont graduates receive offers for significant academic scholarship money.

Sagemont promotes a well-rounded student and encourages participation in outside interests including its award-winning athletic and artistic programs. “As a college preparatory institution, we know that extra-curricular activities are a very important part of a student’s college resume,” explains Principal Iacono. “These activities provide a student with variety in their activities, team spirit, community service opportunities, and also leadership opportunities.”

The Boys Varsity Basketball and Tennis teams have been to the State Finals multiple times and overall the athletics department has won 16 state championships. The school is able to support 18 varsity sports programs through its collaborative access to the finest sports facilities in Weston and surrounding cities. Sagemont’s thespian program is equally talented. The developmental program starts with students as young as fourth grade. The high school drama program has received 50 South Florida Cappie nominations, with eight wins including Best Play for *Dracula* and Best Actress for last year’s *The Miracle Worker*.

This solid academic, artistic and athletic foundation has allowed many Sagemont alumni to go on to greatness. One of the most noteworthy may be Carlos Pena. He is best known for starring on the Nickelodeon series *Big Time Rush* in addition to being a member of the band Big Time Rush. Sagemont alum Sebastian (Yatra) Obando signed a deal with Universal Music, Columbia. Other successful Sagemont graduates include Dylan Flynn who graduated from the Air Force Academy and is now training to be a fighter pilot for the U.S. Air Force, Adrian Swanberg is now a Software Engineer who works for Google X in the self-driving car project, and Lauren (Carey) Gjolaj who is an administrator at the University of Miami Hospital.

One of the reasons Sagemont students are able to reach such success is because of the guiding principles on which the school was founded 20 years ago. These include: providing differentiated instruction to maximize student learning; setting high academic expectations for each student; ensuring each student’s physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs are met; instilling responsibility and respect for oneself, each other and the environment to help students develop into valuable members of the community; and embracing cultural diversity.

That last point is critical because Sagemont welcomes a diverse community of learners representing more than 60 countries from around the world. “Diversity is an important part of The Sagemont School’s mission statement,” states Principal Vigna. “Students can easily matriculate into the school at any grade level and find a comfortable space no matter where they are from.”

In addition, The Sagemont Upper School Campus offers a vibrant international program where traveling scholars attend the high school and are matched with housing within the community. “The presence of these international students positively adds to the blending of cultures at Sagemont and adds a fresh perspective to our campus life,” notes Principal Iacono.

The Sagemont School is hosting a series of Open Houses for prospective families to learn more about the school and its offerings. The Upper School Campus Open House is scheduled for January 18 and 22. The Lower School Campus Open House will take place on January 24. To learn more about The Sagemont School visit www.sagemont.com.