

All-Girls Is All Good



Next school year, Visitation will welcome its first all-girls sixth grade class as we move to a single-gender Middle School. Evoking our motto *Non Scholae, Sed Vitae*, research shows that the benefits of single-gender education go well beyond graduation.

A+ for academics

Strong academics are the indispensable foundation for an excellent school, and an all-girls environment is proven to support academic achievement.

A 2015 study by the National Coalition of Girls' Schools (NCGS) surveyed nearly 13,000 students from all-girls and coed high schools in America. Nearly every student at the all-girls schools – 98.7% – said she expected to earn a four-year college degree, compared to 96% of girls at coed independent schools and only 83% of girls at coed public schools. And more than two-thirds of those at all-girls schools plan to earn a graduate or professional degree, while only one-third of their peers at coed public schools and fewer than two-thirds of those at coed independent schools said the same.

What accounts for the higher aspirations of students at all-girls schools? Nearly all of them say their schools emphasize the understanding of information and ideas (97.7%) and encourage engaging classroom discussions (95.5%). Also, according to a 2013 study by Columbia University's Teachers College of all-girls and coed private high schools, students at all-girls schools do significantly more homework than their coed peers and seek out their teachers' advice more often.

Learning life skills

Thinking critically and communicating effectively are vital skills that every person needs to have at every stage of life. All-girls schools do a superior job of nurturing these skills.

The NCGS study found that nearly 96% of students at all-girls schools said they have learned to write well and think critically, and nearly 92% said they have gained strong oral communication skills. The numbers for girls at coed independent schools were several percentage points lower, and those for girls at coed public schools were lower still.

Partnering with peers

The relationships that develop among students at all-girls schools can play a key role in students' success, both in the classroom and beyond. More than 9 out of 10 students at all-girls schools say they have learned how to work as part of a team, and more than half report that they frequently engage in group studies.

Those at all-girls schools are also much more likely to tutor their fellow students – nearly two-thirds do so, compared to fewer than half of their coed counterparts. And more students from all-girls schools report that they feel their opinions are respected.

Extra participation in extracurriculars

Athletics, arts, service projects, clubs – there is much more to school than just classes. Students at all-girls schools know this well, spending three or more hours a week on extracurricular activities than their peers at coed schools. Those at all-girls institutions are also more likely to report that they are motivated by a desire to succeed outside of school.

And finally...

Here is one final thought on all-girls schools, and in particular on those like Visitation that are grounded in religious teachings. According to the Columbia University study,

“Women from single-sex Catholic schools reported higher levels of academic engagement than their coeducational counterparts even when controlling for significant student characteristics, including high school GPA, religion, socioeconomic status, and race.”

Non Scholae, Sed Vitae indeed.

Holmgren, Dr. Richard A. “Steeped in Learning: *The Student Experience at All-Girls Schools*,” 2015. National Coalition of Girls' Schools.

Sax, Linda J., Riggers, Tiffani A., and Eagan, M. Kevin. “The Role of Single-Sex Education in the Academic Engagement of College-Bound Women: A Multilevel Analysis.” *Teachers College Record*. Volume. 115, 010302, January 2013. Teachers College, Columbia University.



Seventh graders Sonja Johnson, Jaclyn Young, Madelyn McGrath and Katie Hess sort commodities for the Thanksgiving Food Drive.



Sixth grade friends Marissa Costello, Ryan Cullers and Lucy Horst.



Archbishop Hebda distributes Holy Communion at the opening school Mass to juniors Caroline Hansen, Grace Meyers and Meg Pryor.



Seniors Isabella D'Aquila, Lilly McCarty, Eileen Ryan, Kiara Jones, Hope Martin, Lucy Mullen and Julia Goldman enjoy laughter and lunch.



Juniors Sigrid Ferderer and Sarah Svendahl work on a zip line target strike in Michael Volpe's engineering class.

Why All-Girls?

My experience at an all-female school helped me to better understand myself and to have confidence in who I am and in what I believe. I grew from a shy, unconfident young girl into a woman with a strong passion for creativity and a solid point of view. Because I lived in a world without gender limitations in high school, I developed confidence and the courage to step outside my comfort zone.

Christine Fruechte '85, CEO Colle + McVoy

Being in an all-girls school gives me confidence, and I feel free to do the right thing and stand up for myself. In class I never hesitate to raise my hand and give my answer.

Mary Farley '17

I really like being in an all-girls school. My favorite part is that it's calm, and I can be open and my best self without worrying that others might judge me.

Cate Sobocinski, Grade 7

Having had the privilege of teaching in coed, all-boys and all-girls schools, I have witnessed students, especially at Visitation, using this focused opportunity to grow in confidence of their intellect, openness of their heart and conviction of their moral fiber, readying themselves for an unpredictable future in an ever-changing world.

Kathy Miley, Upper School Religion Teacher

The value of an all-girls education here at Visitation is not simply the absence of boys. Rather, the value emerges from a constant focus on what we know about how the girls learn, work and grow, and using that knowledge towards constant refinement of curriculum, instruction and climate towards those ends.

Ben Tierney, PhD, Director of Middle School

According to a research paper by Dr. Linda Sax (UCLA) entitled "Women of Single-Sex and Coeducational High Schools: Differences in their Characteristics and the Transition to College," graduates of an all-girls school are three times more likely to consider careers in engineering. Girls attending Visitation experience a comprehensive immersion into numerous STEM activities, allowing them to gain confidence and view engineering as a viable career option.

Michael Volpe, Upper School Science