

NDP well on its way in \$10 million campaign for Innovation Wing, endowment

TOWSON - Notre Dame Preparatory School broke ground on a new Innovation Wing in June 2018, when it had barely scratched the surface on a \$10 million capital campaign that would pay for the latest transformation of the school.

Asked to measure that leap of faith, the president of the all-girls school referenced the history of the School Sisters of Notre Dame who opened NDP in 1873, a generation after their foundress left Munich for the United States and encountered several dead ends before finding a foothold in Baltimore.

"To say we're going to break ground when we haven't raised the money, that's a defining moment," School Sister of Notre Dame Patricia McCarron said, "but it really is consistent with Mother Theresa (Gerhardinger) coming to America, and with our moving from our original site on Charles Street to Hampton Lane.

"The spirit of the School Sisters is trust and dare. You trust in God's providence and action."

That faith has been rewarded, as the school formally announced to its community Sept. 26 developments that the 800 girls at the grades 6-12 school have been witnessing come to fruition.

NDP is more than 80 percent of the way toward reaching a \$10 million capital campaign, the largest in its history. It had less than \$2 million in pledges, however, when it broke ground on the Innovation Wing, which is near completion. It will open in January and be formally dedicated next April 22, Earth Day 2020.

The new, 23,500-square-foot-wing will accentuate opportunities for students in both its burgeoning STEAM program and the Bette Ellis O'Connor Humanities program. In addition to a new gathering space, it includes a biomedical suite; a classroom dedicated to computer science and cybersecurity; and a two-story "Design and

Build” laboratory.

Whereas students had to construct theater sets on stage, for example, now they will be able to construct them in that lab and then be transported as needed. According to Mary Agnes Sheridan, STEAM director at the school, there will simply be more room to innovate with tools such as 3D printers and CNC routers, computer-controlled cutting machines.

Since 2006, more than 1,000 NDP students in the upper level have gone off campus for Women in (WIN) experiences, which can mean internships with doctors, engineers and other professionals. The Innovation Wing allows students to further explore some of that learning in house.

“We’re always about responding to the needs of the time and looking towards the future,” Sister Patricia said. “We know our girls can do it; We’ve seen them do it. What this space does is allow them to take their dreams to the next level.”

The Innovation Wing is on the south side of the school, bridging the existing science and English department wings on the west and east, respectively. With the Mother Philomen Library on the north, the new wing creates a second, larger courtyard on campus, covering nearly 12,000 square feet.

The “Limitless: Redefining Possibilities, Unleashing Potential” campaign has received nine pledges of \$250,000 or more, and another 21 of more than \$100,000.

In addition to the construction, the campaign will provide more than \$2 million for scholarships to NDP, one of three Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore where the annual cost of attendance has surpassed \$20,000.

The campaign’s co-chairs are Lilly Hunter, an alumna and current NDP parent, and Scott Wilfong, a former NDP parent and current NDP grandparent.

“NDP must keep tuition competitive and scholarships available,” Wilfong said in a news release from the school, “and (campaign) support through endowed scholarships and the annual fund will help with both of those directives.”