

Unveils new state-of-the-art track and field facility as part of ongoing capital campaign

The Village School of Naples, an independent school serving students in preschool through twelfth grade, recently unveiled its new \$1.8-million Track and Field facility. The state-of-the-art project includes a 400-meter, synthetic track with an interior competition field for other competitive sports such as soccer, lacrosse, and football.

Construction began on the project last fall and was completed just in time for the current season. The project is part of an ongoing \$3-million renovation and expansion of the school's academic, arts, and athletic facilities to accommodate current and future growth.

"We are grateful to all of the families, staff, and other donors who have generously contributed to making the dream of a new Track & Field complex on our campus a reality," said Dennis Chapman, Head of School for The Village School of Naples. "These new athletic facilities will further advance our growing varsity athletic program and help us continue to attract top student-athletes from both in and outside of Southwest Florida."

Founded nearly four decades ago as a private institution for preschool students, The Village School of Naples introduced an Upper School division for high school students in 2017. Since then, the school's leadership has been aggressively renovating and expanding the academic, arts, and athletic facilities to accommodate current and future growth.

Included in the most recent campus improvements are a near doubling of space in the two-story Upper School Building to provide more classroom space and administrative offices as well as a new culinary arts test kitchen. Also within the Upper School is the Lauren S. Tayon Drama Studio with a large main stage area along with rehearsal space, music rooms, storage, and dining/theater seating for future plays and other performances.

"This campuswide improvement plan will enhance the student experience and



Students participate in a ceremonial first walk around the new oval track

help us achieve our vision of being the preferred educational choice for students and their families in our community," said Jane Badger, Director of Development for The Village School. "Each of these projects will be recognized with donor naming opportunities."

Future phases of outdoor athletic facilities could include six lighted tennis courts immediately adjacent to the new track along with accessory fields that could be used for such sports as javelin, discus, and shot-put. There also could be additional practice fields.

The task of growing the athletics program lies with John Egan, who was recently brought in as Athletic Director at The Village School. Egan, who previously served as the Athletic Director at Christian Heritage School in Trumbull, Connecticut, will focus on building the Knights' athletic program into one that draws in top student-athletes across all sports.

"It is estimated that more than sixty percent of Village School students participate on an athletic team and more than 100 of them participate each athletic season," Egan said. "So, it is important we

continue to invest in top-notch athletic facilities on our campus."

Located at 6000 Goodlette-Frank Rd., The Village School of Naples originally began as The Caring Place Preschool in 1985 as an outreach at North Naples United Methodist Church. In 2000, the church relocated to the present campus location and added The Village School, beginning with K-2 and thirty-seven students. In 2006, the school was accredited by the Florida Council of Independent Schools and the Florida Kindergarten Council.

In 2009, parents asked The Village School for a middle school to be added and soon after added the middle school one grade a year to complete the eighth grade. Four years later, the Board of Directors voted to add an upper school with seventeen students in the fall of 2017.

In June 2020, The Village School celebrated its first-ever graduating class of seniors with a class of twelve students. The school currently has over 100 upper school students, including eighteen in the class of 2022. For additional information, visit www.villageschoolnaples.org.