

SPRING 2021

FREEMING MINDS

Campaign Impact Report

FREEINGMINDS.SJC.EDU

COMING HOME

This spring, St. John's College welcomed our students back to campuses and classrooms where great things are happening.

See how your gifts are making a difference.

WE NOW HAVE \$245 MILLION IN CAMPAIGN COMMITMENTS TOWARD OUR \$300 MILLION GOAL



These generous gifts support students today, as they return to our campuses and classrooms and prepare the college for tomorrow, when new challenges will inevitably come our way.

HOW YOUR GIFTS BENEFIT ST. JOHN'S OVER TIME

\$200M



\$149M

THE ST. JOHN'S ENDOWMENT

As the cornerstone of our philanthropy-centered financial model, the St. John's Endowment places the future of the college squarely in the hands of alumni and friends.

Unlike gifts that are immediately spent, gifts to the St. John's Endowment are invested, with the goal of generating a permanent stream of annual income. Every year a portion of the endowment's net asset value is made available for the college to use, thereby reducing our dependence on revenue from students, who are increasingly unable to shoulder the burden. By adding \$200 million to the endowment, *Freeing Minds* will ultimately provide the college with \$10 million or more every year, in perpetuity.

CURRENT USE GIFTS

While our endowment is the mainstay of our future, the college still requires a firm financial base from which to operate in the present.

\$100M



\$83M

Campaign gifts totaling \$100 million, including annual gifts to the Fund for St. John's, will focus on the immediate needs of the college and our students. These gifts enable the college to address urgent priorities, such as scholarships, campus improvements, and support programs that help students succeed during and after their time at St. John's.

HOW YOUR GIFTS IMPACT THE ENTIRE ST. JOHN'S EXPERIENCE



\$109M

\$125M

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Although much has changed at St. John's, our commitment to our rigorous academic Program remains unwavering—and so does our commitment to helping students and tutors take this unforgettable journey together. Of our \$300 million campaign goal, \$125 million will ensure the future of the college and our Program as well as directly support faculty with endowed tutorships and other initiatives.



\$69M

\$100M

STUDENT SUPPORT

The economic and emotional upheaval wrought by the pandemic has cast a spotlight on student support services, revealing the substantial progress the college has made but also the need for further improvements. One-third of gifts to *Freeing Minds* will support scholarships, internships and fellowships, health and wellness efforts, career services, and other student success initiatives.



\$42M

\$50M

FINANCIAL STABILITY

Ever the contrarians, St. John's ended FY20 with an improving financial picture, highlighted by a deficit that has shrunk 90 percent from its peak of \$12 million in 2016. The college expects to end FY21 with a modest covid-related deficit of less than \$1 million and is on target to achieve a balanced budget in FY22. These results are due in large part to Annual Fund gifts that help keep St. John's sustainable year after year.



\$14M

\$25M

CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS

Unlike many of our peers, we aren't participating in the arms race to build big, elaborate facilities. Instead, the campaign is focusing on essential improvements that provide the ideal home for pursuing big ideas: campuses that are beautiful, safe, and comfortable—campuses that inspire wonder and are wonderfully intimate. A variety of improvements are already underway, including projects to enhance community life and shrink our carbon footprint.

Of our \$245 million in campaign commitments, \$12 million has not yet been designated to specific areas. Figures are dated as of March 31, 2021 and rounded to the nearest million.

📍 ANNAPOLIS, MD

With its blend of glass and (for the time being) Ficus trees on a campus better known for bricks and ivy, Mellon Hall was meant to be a center of attention—and community.

The building is the brainchild of famed mid-century architect Richard Neutra, who saw Mellon Hall as a place where students would meet, collaborate, and create. An upcoming renovation will breathe new life into Neutra's creation, bringing it back in line with the designer's original vision and fulfilling a crucial need for space that supports student life and the arts.

Plans include comfortable lounge areas, an outdoor terrace, dedicated arts space, and an expansion of the gathering room affectionately known as "the fishbowl," pictured right. Gifts to the *Freeing Minds* campaign will help fund the project in combination with a \$5 million matching grant from the state of Maryland.

The transformation will begin this summer. ❖



📍 SANTA FE, NM

Susmi Sharma (SF21) understands the anxiety that can come with being a freshman at the most rigorous college in America. She understands because she has been in those shoes. "I felt like I was not prepared to be a Johnnie," she says. "Almost every single time I had to write a paper, I wished I had someone to talk to."

Through the Pritzker Promise Bridge Program, Susmi, pictured left, spent her senior year as a peer mentor, offering new Johnnies the sympathetic ear and voice of experience that she feels are important to student success. "We talk about the issues they are facing in and out of the classroom, and I try to provide guidance and support."

She recognizes that staff and tutors do a lot to help students adjust but says peer mentorships offer something special. "The student is given permission to really open up about their anxiety. This would have been great for me when I was new."

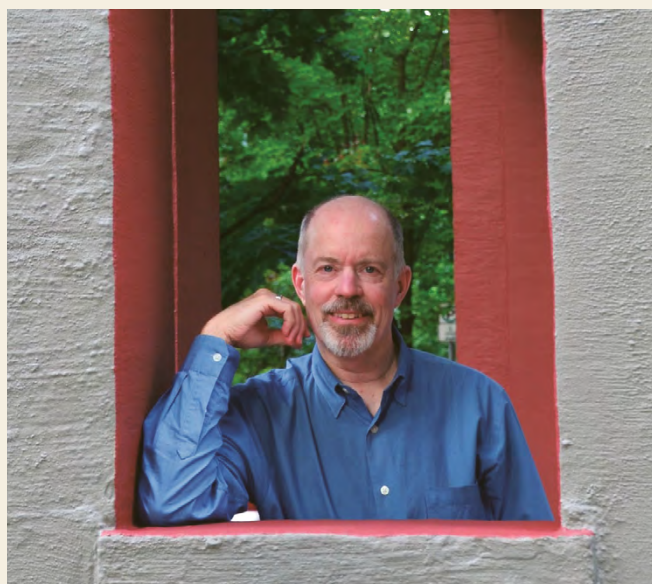
Funded through a gift from the Jay Pritzker Foundation, the Bridge Program is one of a growing number of student support initiatives benefiting from the *Freeing Minds* campaign. ❖

📍 SANTA FE, NM

It is the job of a writer to open doors onto worlds both real and imagined—but what are the doors through which the writer walks? For Byron Schneider (SFGI89), the Graduate Institute at St. John's held that answer.

After earning his BA in literature and creative writing, Byron, pictured right, embarked on a successful editorial career but says he realized along the way that something was missing. "I had largely formed my own course of undergraduate study, and I became increasingly aware of the gaps in my education." With the help of the Henry A. Austin Prize for literary merit, Byron pursued his journey into the Great Books—and himself. "St. John's is the door," he says, "through which I walked into a life of greater intention."

That intention now includes his campaign gift to others. The Byron W. Schneider Endowed Scholarship will serve as a permanent source of tuition support for GI students, with preference given to students who have an interest in writing. "I want to help students understand how a broad education can immeasurably inform their writing, their careers, and their lives." ❖



📍 ANNAPOLIS, MD

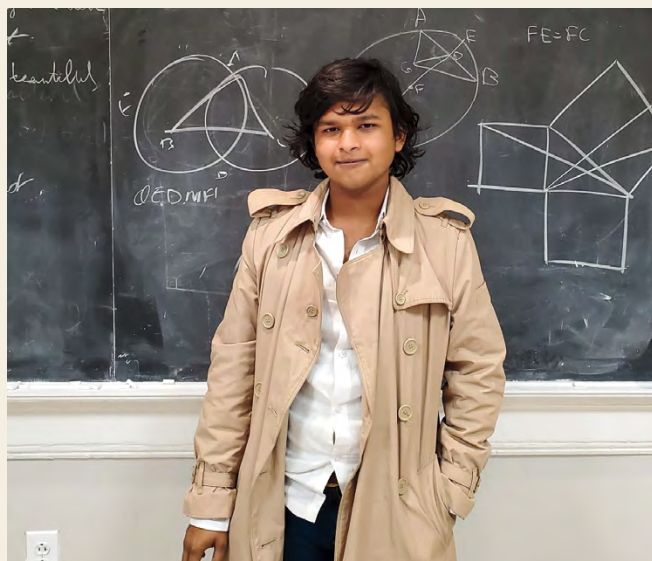
Serendipity, like St. John's, has a way of changing lives.

Parth Bajaj (A24), pictured right, never expected to attend college in the United States—until his high school hired a new history teacher, and the first star aligned. “He told me about this college where I could learn about books, the world, and myself.”

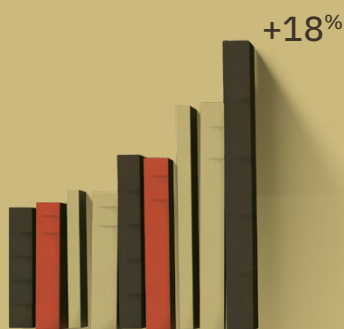
That same week, St. John's admissions counselors paid a visit to Parth's high school in Pune, India. “We talked for an hour. They didn't care about what I knew but what I wanted to know.”

Parth was accepted into the Fall Class of 2024, but with a ten-hour time difference, he knew remote classes wouldn't work. The college responded by restoring a spring entry term, and Parth became one of 28 “Febbies” who began their freshman year in February and will complete it this summer. Of those 28 students, 24 had, like Parth, chosen to defer their enrollment from the fall.

“From the moment I applied to the minute I arrived on campus, I've felt like the college really cares about and understands this unique position that students like me are in.” ❖



THE ST. JOHN'S ENDOWMENT



With a market return of 18 percent for the year, the performance of the St. John's Endowment ranked in the top quartile of peer institutions for 2020.

THE ST. JOHN'S ENDOWMENT ENDED 2020 AT A RECORD HIGH

\$217M

The campaign is on track to double our endowment, which will increase the percentage of annual expenses that are shouldered by investments rather than students.

📍 SANTA FE, NM

For Diana Hidalgo (SF24), it has been hard to bridge the ocean that connects three shores: the world of St. John's, the world the college is gradually revealing to her, and the world she has always known. It's even harder when you're the first in your family to attempt the journey.

“Going from public school to St. John's has been quite a shift. It's overwhelming,” says Diana, pictured right. “It is helpful to talk to someone about it, someone who can assure me that I'm not the only one with doubts and worries.”

That someone is Susmi Sharma (SF21), her peer mentor through the Pritzker Promise Bridge Program. “Susmi and I talk about books and essays but also about the best restaurants in Santa Fe. I like to think I've found a mentor and a friend.”

Initiatives like the Bridge Program recently earned St. John's national recognition as a First-gen Forward college, a distinction given to institutions that are committed to the success of first-generation students. St. John's is the first institution in New Mexico to receive this designation. ❖



📍 SANTA FE, NM

Every Johnnie is closely acquainted with the sun. They explore its relationship to the earth, track its position in the sky, and if they study in Santa Fe, they enjoy 283 days of it—80 more than the national average.

A solar power project is now underway that will help St. John's to harness its light, giving students a campus that is sunny but also more sustainable. Funding for new solar array panels comes from an anonymous alumni couple, whose *Freeing Minds* gift also financed an LED lighting conversion, completed this spring. Both projects are expected to yield significant savings and potentially eliminate energy costs on the Santa Fe campus.

Environmental stewardship is a priority the couple shares with Johnnies across generations. The energy audit that inspired their gift was itself spurred in part by a gift from the Santa Fe Class of 2019. Deep discussions on the importance of sustainability and philanthropy led to a 100 percent participation rate from the senior class, who joined with other members of the St. John's community to fund the audit's completion. ❖



📍 ANNAPOLIS, MD

Luke Olson (A20) can look back with some levity on his hunt for legal work in the summer of 2020.

Having worked as a chef before enrolling at St. John's, Luke, pictured left with family, assumed the transition from kitchen to courtroom would be the right one for him. "Law seemed like the kitchen of the philosophy world," he jokes. His 260 applications yielded only one interview.

It didn't help that Luke entered the toughest job market in decades. What did help was Jobs 4 Johnnies, a board-led initiative that paired new graduates with volunteers who offered connections and advice. Luke says Alumni Association president Mark Parenti (A92) helped him see that his interests were aligned as much with education as law. He shifted his focus and found a job he loves, teaching logic to high school students.

Board member and Jobs 4 Johnnies mentor Johanna Wilson (A90), who has made career services a focus for her campaign giving, notes that "meaningful work and mutual support" have as much to do with a well-lived life as books and a balance. There is room, she says, "for everyone to help." ❖

→ sjc.edu/olson

📍 ANNAPOLIS, MD

Until his mother showed him an article about an online investing revolution, Andrew Hastings (A20) was unaware that an investment he had made a few months earlier was about to return 300 percent.

When it did, he says the sum he received felt like a gift, one he wanted to share.

"Percolating in the back of my mind was the *Freeing Minds* campaign," says Andrew, pictured right. He remembers hearing about the campaign during his senior year and thinking the move to a philanthropy-centered model was noble and brave—and possibly risky.

Out of "gratitude but also concern," he decided to make his first-ever gift to the college. "I just wanted this education to continue."

Board member Peter Marber also stepped forward to encourage gifts from recent alumni by offering to match up to \$10,000 in first-time gifts. When combined with the Winiarski Family Foundation Challenge, Marber's match quadrupled the value of Andrew's gift, exponentially increasing its impact on students' lives. ❖

→ sjc.edu/hastings





ST JOHN'S College

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