

Saint Stephen's Episcopal School has a long and colorful history when it comes to the performing arts. For decades, the all-school musical was one of the focal points of each academic year. The announcement of the production during opening week was always much-anticipated, and the rehearsals and shows were happenings that brought the entire school community together. That tradition continues now with two annual productions featuring various grade levels that allow more of our student performers to showcase their talents.

Budding actors, singers, musicians, dancers and more are present every year within our student body, and our dedicated faculty work each day to encourage and bring out the best in these developing artists. Students excel not only in fine arts, but in many areas, through their consistent passion, hard work, and creativity.

Since the founding of the school, however, a good deal of energy has been centered around creating appropriate spaces for student performers to practice and advance their craft. Whether it was transforming an acoustically challenging and uncomfortable gymnasium into a working theater or converting classroom spaces into band venues and a playhouse, teachers, students, and volunteers have taken on the challenge with gusto. Instead of bemoaning deficiencies, it has always been a labor of love for those involved to create first-class art in makeshift surroundings.

But the time has come for the hard work of past, present, and future to be rewarded.

Imagine opening night and the feeling of excitement when the lights dim and the curtain rises for the first time at the performing arts center. Gone will be decades of improvisation and wondering “can we do this?” Instead, the facility will provide a welcoming home for spectators and a place for young artists to learn on – and behind – the stage.

Saint Stephen's alumni and budding professional actors Gabriella ('10) and Griffin Quinta ('12) said it best in a recent letter to the school: “We're more than ecstatic to know that future Falcons will have the chance to spread their wings in a brand new theater. Even if Broadway isn't ultimately your calling, there are so many lessons and values to be learned within a theatrical space. You learn to be confident. You learn that making mistakes is okay. And most importantly, you learn that everyone deserves a chance to be heard.”

In addition to theater and music productions, the multi-use facility will be able to host a wide variety of functions, including graduation ceremonies, dances, guest speakers, luncheons and much more.

This project is the product of a wonderful collaboration between Saint Stephen's and Christ Episcopal Church that will culminate in the construction of the performing arts center and a new thrift shop/food pantry for the church. Total cost is estimated at approximately \$6-million, which includes a \$1-million endowment for the future maintenance of the building.

The performing arts center is a critical and final piece of the Saint Stephen's Master Plan and it is my hope that you will join me by offering your support. This facility will not only create a dynamic new home for the arts at SSES, but it will be shared with the community, further strengthening the school's leadership role in Manatee County.



Jean



THE PERFORMING
ARTS CENTER
CAMPAIGN



315 41st Street West • Bradenton, FL 34209 • www.saintstephens.org



THE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER AT SAINT STEPHEN'S



In 2003, the Saint Stephen's Board of Trustees devised a strategic plan to develop the school's campus infrastructure in support of future growth. The fulfillment of this plan has been a steady progression of successful campaigns led by generations of families, and built around a central theme - **One Community, One Vision**. With completion of the Moore Athletic Complex (2013) and the Marine Science Center (2016), the board quickly shifted its attention to the final piece of this important blueprint – a multi-purpose performing arts center.

The realization of previous projects has profoundly affected and deepened the impact of that particular area on the overall tapestry of the school. The athletic complex has supported Falcons sports teams on their path to multiple state championships in just three short years. The Marine Science Center has led to Saint Stephen's being chosen to host the international "Water is Life" conference in 2020 – the only U.S. school ever selected for this honor.

The addition of the performing arts center at Saint Stephen's will facilitate the further evolution of a number of programs, creating a stronger balance of opportunities for students. Front and center is the performing arts department, which has staged memorable shows for years in a gymnasium, while parents sat on bleachers and listened to lines and music delivered in acoustic conditions that were less than conducive to clear, effective communication! Theater and music performances are not only important in developing students' appreciation for the arts, but participation in these areas is also critical to their behavioral and cognitive development.

Having a venue that is available for events such as academic competitions, commencement ceremonies, speaker series, testimonial dinners, music and theatrical productions will enhance the lives of the Saint Stephen's community, the Christ Church community, and the people of Manatee and Sarasota counties. The Board of Trustees and administration at Saint Stephen's are firmly committed to ensuring that the facility is accessible to the greater community. Just as the Moore Athletic Complex has been home to the Manatee Bulls youth football league and the annual Boys and Girls Club track meet, the performing arts center will allow the school to enhance its efforts to reach out and share its resources.

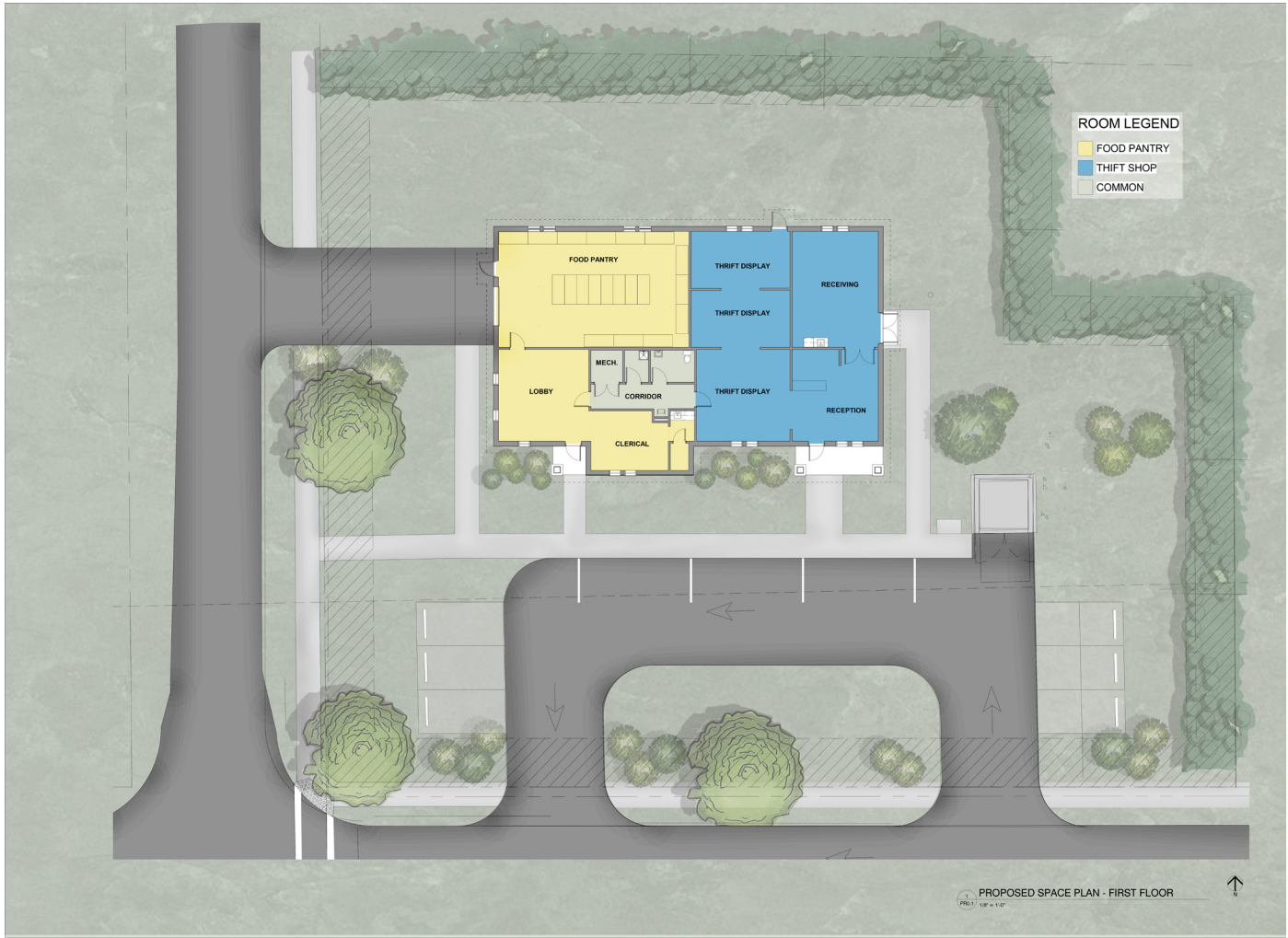


Seating up to 850 people for auditorium-style events, and up to 400 for sit down dinners, the performing arts center will be a perfect venue for community events:

- Speaker Series
- Political forums/ debates
- Community theater
- Artists in Residence
- Childrens' theater
- Seminars and workshops
- Awards ceremonies
- and much more!



Architect: Hall Architects, PA | Contractor: Willis A Smith Construction



Christ Church Thrift Shop and The Lord's Pantry