



# GARRISON FOREST SCHOOL

OWINGS MILLS, MARYLAND

HEAD OF SCHOOL

JULY 2018

[www.gfs.org](http://www.gfs.org)



Carney  
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& ASSOCIATES



## Mission

*At Garrison Forest School, we prepare our students in and out of the classroom to thrive in a complex, changing world by:*

- *challenging them to strive for academic excellence and to grow into informed, independent, and creative thinkers*
- *cultivating an authentic and resilient sense of self, grounded in respect and integrity*
- *creating a diverse and inclusive community built on a spirit of caring*
- *inspiring young women to lead and to serve with passion, purpose, and joy*

## THE POSITION

Garrison Forest School, an independent all-girls PreK-12 day and boarding school in Owings Mills, Maryland, is seeking a new Head of School to lead its community of 550 young women and an exceptional faculty of 87, starting in July 2018.

Situated on a stunning 110-acre campus minutes from downtown Baltimore in the gracious suburb of Owings Mills, Garrison Forest School (GFS) offers a rich, whole-child college-preparatory education that empowers students to realize their full potential and live lives of purpose.

Garrison Forest seeks a Head of School who can build on the strength of the community, while moving forward as an institution of 21st-century learning. The next Head will serve as educational leader of the school, collaborating with division heads, deans, team leaders, directors, and departments, while working to embrace the next chapter in the school's rich history. It will be important that the next Head is passionate about girls' education, and fully embraces the school's traditions and mission, maintaining its reputation for excellence while propelling the school into the future.

## SCHOOL HISTORY

Garrison Forest School was founded in 1910 by Mary Moncrieffe Livingston, a teacher with a vision for a school focused on educating children and young women "To Be Rather Than To Seem," the school's Latin motto. Since that time, Garrison Forest has continued Livingston's original commitment to academic rigor infused with exceptional character-building, and the result is more than a century of excellence, empowerment, and growth.

Recent Garrison Forest history includes the addition of the international boarding program in the early 90's, the beginning of GFS's partnership with Johns Hopkins in the early 2000's, and the establishment of the James Center: Programs and Partnerships with a Public Purpose in 2008.

The new Head will succeed Dr. Kim Roberts. During Roberts' tenure, she implemented several campus and curricular enhancements, including the Creative Co-op makerspaces, a new Lower School playground, and a new Outdoor Classroom. In 2015, the Board approved a new strategic plan and adopted five Core Values, articulating a commitment



to fostering authentic, brave, compassionate, curious, and spirited students prepared to learn, connect, collaborate, serve, and succeed at Garrison Forest and beyond.

Lila Lohr '63, one of the country's most respected independent school leaders, returns to her alma mater as the Interim Head of School for the 2017-2018 school year.



## THE SCHOOL

Garrison Forest School is an independent school with an all-girls day and boarding program and coeducational preschool. Faculty explain that “there is no typical Garrison girl;” instead, the school provides an environment in which each individual takes risks, gains confidence, and follows her own interests. Of the 572 students in total, 34% identify as students of color and 12% are international students, making for a diverse and global community. The boarding program, for 76 students in grades 8-12, offers girls the support of a strong faculty, staff, and student community coupled with the challenge of independent living in preparation for a successful transition to college life.

Passionate teachers are at the core of the Garrison Forest experience. Seventy-six percent of faculty hold advanced degrees and 34% have served 10 years or more at GFS; the school was named among the *Baltimore Sun*’s “Best Places to Work” every year for the past three years. A student-faculty ratio of 7.6 to 1 allows for relationship-building and support, and the single-gender environment helps girls thrive, discovering their authentic selves and using their voices with confidence and power. The first word students and faculty use to describe GFS is “community;” a school where student-faculty relationships are central to learning, where individuals feel well-supported, and where collaboration thrives.

GFS provides over \$4M per year in financial assistance for over 40% of its students and their families. It is accredited by both AIMS and the Middle States Association. Endowment stands at \$38M.

## ACADEMICS

The rigorous and challenging academic experience at Garrison Forest centers on the ideal of “knowledge that sticks: habits of heart and mind that stay with students long into the future.” At every grade level, teachers work to build enduring skills such as perseverance, creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and curiosity in order to give students the tools they need to succeed in college and in life. Students appreciate the meaningful relationships they are able to forge with teachers, and students know



that faculty genuinely want them to succeed. Teachers speak of the growth mindset they have for students and are serious about the holistic preparation of a next generation of women leaders. Faculty are committed to the GFS mission and believe “our intention to serve the girls anchors us.”

Rather than simply providing instruction, teachers at Garrison Forest seek to contextualize learning, helping students delve into deeper questions and make connections across disciplines. Garrison Forest has a commitment to STEAM curriculum in conjunction with other signature program through the James Center; the school aims to foster girls’ knowledge and competence, empowering students to excel in science, technology, engineering, arts/design, and math through Imagineering and the Creative Co-Op makerspace. Girls are encouraged to take risks, and the incorporation of choice in learning for all ages cultivates students’ engagement and investment in each lesson and activity.

## PRESCHOOL

Preschool at Garrison Forest is the foundation of building life-long learners. Students cultivate a love of learning through exploration, collaboration, and curiosity, establishing a strong foundation for future academic growth. The co-educational program provides a supportive environment for children ages 2, 3, 4, and 5, with a range of schedules designed to suit the needs of families. Being part of the larger GFS community provides preschoolers with unique opportunities, including access to the greater campus and its resources and opportunities for interaction with older students. Preschoolers at GFS are exposed to language arts, math, science, music, art, Spanish, and the library, as well as Imagineering, an inquiry-based engineering and design curriculum. Physical education classes support the development of body awareness, coordination, and motor skills.





## LOWER SCHOOL

The academic program in the Lower School is defined by a spirit of inquiry, cooperation, and enthusiasm for learning. Garrison Forest puts girls at the center of every aspect of the school experience, empowering students to embrace their potential in every subject, from reading and math to science and the arts. Across the Lower School curriculum, enrichment is balanced with a focus on building foundational knowledge and cultivating 21st-century skills such as collaboration and creativity. As students move through the elementary grades, their learning progresses from concrete, multi-sensory experiences to abstract thinking and critical problem solving. In the fourth and fifth grades, girls delve into technology, with a laptop program and annual STEAM week, during which students learn coding and apply their knowledge in a programming challenge.

Learning in the Lower School is further enriched by a strong community: twice weekly Morning Meetings allow the grades to come together for activities focused on respect, multicultural education, public speaking, and more, while the Reading Buddies and Big and Little Sister activities offer opportunities for peer-to-peer bonding and leadership. Thanks to small class sizes and expert faculty, teachers know students' learning needs and passions. Various grouping models for reading and math provide each student with an appropriate blend of support and challenge, and a full-time Academic Resources Coordinator allows for smaller reading groups and individualized support where needed. Lower School students contrast GFS with their previous schools appreciating that "here making mistakes helps you learn."





## MIDDLE SCHOOL

Middle School at GFS offers academic challenges in a nurturing environment focused on helping girls find success. The program is intentionally designed to offer a breadth of curricular and co-curricular opportunities. Core academic disciplines include math, English, science, and history which are fully complemented by the visual and performing arts, digital thinking, modern and classical languages and decision making. All of the Middle School courses emphasize skill-building inquiry and critical and creative thinking as teachers work in unison to develop interdisciplinary experiences, such as Signature Projects in each grade level.

Across grade levels, the curriculum works to “fuel and catalyze” girls’ interests through a wide variety of courses and activities. An element of student choice allows girls to explore their passions and discover new interests: the one-week “mini-mester” offers an opportunity to delve into a new topic and grade 8 electives include mural making, design engineering, filmmaking, debate club, art club, and robotics. All Middle Schoolers participate in a comprehensive wellness program focused on relationship-building, decision-making, and topics in health, and the GFS advisory program creates safe spaces for girls to take risks with the support of caring faculty members. Throughout the Middle School, teachers are passionate about getting to know each student, offering encouragement and feedback. An Upper School Academic Mentoring program matches Upper and Middle School students for tutoring and homework help, and a dedicated Middle School Academic Resource Coordinator ensures that all students are challenged and accommodated in their learning needs.





## UPPER SCHOOL

The Upper School is the culmination of the Garrison Forest student experience, offering girls the opportunity to pursue a rich program of core and elective courses and become leaders in the school community. A range of Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) offerings allow for challenge and intellectual risk-taking; AP classes include Calculus AB and BC, English Literature, and U.S. History. STEAM continues to be an area of strength throughout the Upper School: 100% of students take four years of mathematics and 93% take four years of science, including AP courses in biology, chemistry, and environmental science. The programs in French, Latin, and Spanish, and Chinese all extend through the AP level, and many Latin students supplement their learning with a modern language as well.

Across the curriculum, the Upper School offers opportunities for girls to find and discover their passions, whether that means taking computer electives such as robotics, programming, or documentary filmmaking; working with guest choreographers in advanced dance classes; or participating in the Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) program, Garrison Forest's groundbreaking partnership with Johns Hopkins University. WISE allows students to work on cutting-edge research with professors and graduate students (many of these students have gone on to major in the sciences). As one senior expressed, "at first we are given lots of opportunities – then we are taught to seek them out." The GFS Independent Senior Project, the first of its kind among Baltimore independent schools, requires students to complete a two-week professional internship at the end of senior year, gaining hands-on experience and insight into post-college career choice. The school is also one of only six high schools nationwide piloting the new Small World Initiative (SWI) course, a Yale University-founded crowdsourcing effort to discover new antibiotics to help stop the spread of superbugs.





## ARTS AND ATHLETICS

From preschool through grade 12, arts are an integral component of the Garrison Forest experience. The school's historically robust fine arts program includes visual arts courses in drawing, film, painting, photography, sculpture, and design and performing arts courses in dance, theater arts, musical theater, chorus and chamber choir, band, and musical technology. The fall production of "The Language Archive" won best play in the 2017 Baltimore Theatre Awards. In the Upper School, all freshmen take an innovative, interdisciplinary music, theater, and design class. Advanced Placement courses are offered in both art history and studio art.

The GFS athletic program begins with physical education; as students move into the Middle and Upper School, girls have the opportunity to join one of 48 teams in 16 sports, including badminton, cross country, field hockey, lacrosse, riding, polo, golf, indoor/outdoor/winter soccer, tennis, basketball, softball, squash, volleyball, and track. GFS has top-ranking teams in field hockey, polo, and badminton. This year's lacrosse team ranked in the top 25 nationally. GFS is also further distinguished by its riding and polo programs, and the campus features both a superb equestrian center and an indoor polo ring. By competing as Grizzlies, GFS girls develop a sense of self-esteem, sportsmanship, teamwork, leadership, and cooperation that prepare them to meet challenges on the field and off.

## SCHOOL LIFE

Life at Garrison Forest is enriched by school spirit and long-standing traditions, such as the yearlong competition between the two spirit teams: "Lights" (Light Blue) and "Darks" (Dark Blue). Spirit days provide an opportunity for girls to dress up in support of their teams; the daily student uniform is another nod to GFS history, as well as a means of keeping the focus on learning during the school





day. Students describe being drawn to GFS by the spirit and joy they found on campus, and by how welcomed they felt. They recount that once on campus, they also felt such strong support from teachers and from other students, and learned to appreciate how “there were new things waiting for us with every new year of school.”

Co-curricular activities are a key feature of the GFS program, from clubs in the Middle and Upper School Student Forum, which provides opportunities for student leadership. Community service has been a part of the Garrison Forest experience since World War I, when GFS girls volunteered to shuck corn while farmers went to the front. Today, students participate in community service projects in areas such as the environment, education, and health. The student-led Service League involves all Upper School students in service to the Baltimore area and beyond, and the Elsie Foster Jenkins '53 Fellowship Program gives Upper Schoolers the opportunity to pursue independent service learning projects. As a complement to the all-girls environment, boys from nearby schools are often included in service activities and social events, from mixers to STEM days to the annual Upper School spring musical.

Diversity is an integral part of the ethos of GFS, with numerous cultural and affinity groups such as Sisters in Unity, a group for Middle School students of color, and Black, Asian, and Jewish Students Associations for both students and faculty. Programming throughout the school year is focused on building cultural competency. The Dialogue Across Difference program hosts and trains faculty and students to host community conversations on the intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality, and more. For the last several years, the Power of Women (POW!) speaker series has brought accomplished, innovative women leaders across an array of career fields to Garrison Forest to inspire students' career aspirations and prepare them for a lifetime of leadership.





## BOARDING PROGRAM

Boarding students have been a part of the Garrison Forest since the school's founding, and today 76 regional, national, and international boarders call GFS their home away from home. Garrison Forest offers short-term and long-term boarding opportunities for students from near and far. Fifty percent of boarding students come to GFS from outside the United States.

Residential Life at Garrison Forest provides students with opportunities to develop compassion, self-confidence, and a sense of independence that will serve them well as they transition to the college environment. GFS boarding students forge friendships, build relationships with dorm families, and take part in authentic cultural exchange as part of a truly international community. Robust weekend programming provides opportunities for fun and enrichment, and seasonal activities, movie trips, and museum visits are open to both day and boarding students, allowing for the creation of cohesive bonds. Nineteen faculty, all of whom reside on campus, participate in the residential program.

## PHYSICAL CAMPUS

Garrison Forest School is located on 110 exquisite acres in the suburbs outside the city of Baltimore. The campus is a beautiful property featuring paths, woods, fields, and pasture. Campus facilities include five academic buildings, the McLennan Library, a performing arts center, dining hall, and a 400-seat theater. A state-of-the-art gym, two grass and two turf playing fields, softball field, tennis courts, and two age-appropriate playgrounds offer ample space for athletics and outdoor play. The architecture of the campus comprises a mix of both historic buildings, purposefully renovated to accommodate teaching and learning, and newer purpose-built construction, such as the LEED-certified Middle School. Three dorms provide student and faculty housing, and Lochinvar, the hilltop castle-like home located on the north side of the campus, serves as the residence for the Head of School.





## OWINGS MILLS AND BALTIMORE

Owings Mills, Maryland, is an inner suburb of the city of Baltimore. Located at the northern terminus of the metro, the town enjoys a large population of families and young professionals. Because of its lively community and small-business benefits, CNN Money named Owings Mills in the top 50 on its list of “Best Places to Live and Launch.” Less than a half hour drive from Johns Hopkins University and the cultural opportunities of downtown Baltimore, Owings Mills offers a relaxed lifestyle in close proximity to the city. Owings Mills is served by the Baltimore County Public School District, and is also home to other independent schools.

Baltimore is a city marked by a vibrant downtown and Inner Harbor area, ethnic neighborhoods, and regal boulevards designed by Frederick Law Olmsted. It has a distinguished academic and intellectual history, major league and Division I sports teams, a thriving cultural community, and beautiful natural resources. Cultural life is enriched by museums, orchestras, and theaters, including the Baltimore Museum of Art, Walters Art Museum, American Visionary Arts Museum, and Reginald F. Lewis Museum of African-American History, the Baltimore Symphony, and Center Stage. Sports fans support the Orioles, the Ravens, the Preakness, and numerous college (and high school) lacrosse teams. The urban area is anchored by the port and the Harbor. A short drive leads to farms, the Chesapeake Bay, Eastern Shore beaches, the Appalachian Mountains, and Washington, D.C.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The new Head of School will have the benefit of the Strategic Plan, and the support of a strong, high-functioning Board. Many of the area independent schools are experiencing enrollment challenges and GFS is no exception. The school is being thoughtful about its strategies, programs, pricing, and tuition support. Helping GFS carve a sharper and more distinctive identity in its markets will be a priority. As well, developing greater community cohesion and reinforcing the school's positive association with Baltimore and its surrounding communities, should receive attention. GFS has strong signature programs with an abundance of ideas for development which need to be prioritized, planned, and paced properly. The school's messaging needs to be more frequent, more compelling, and more broad-based, backed up by strength in program, improved student retention, and strong campus esprit d'corps. Other issues that the next Head will address include:

- Tuition levels and the GFS value proposition
- Long-term financial sustainability
- Support for a broader range of student learning styles
- Train and mentor several new administrators
- Attention and resources toward the boarding program
- Increase school connections across divisions and sense of PreK-12 community
- Develop nimble and effective operational systems
- Increase resources

## QUALIFICATIONS AND QUALITIES OF THE NEXT HEAD OF SCHOOL

The Garrison community is eager to move the school to the next level of excellence and stature. Myriad opportunities exist for the next Head to help the school succeed in different arenas of school and campus life. Doing so will require a leader who embraces Garrison Forest as an institution, with its rich history and deep generational connections. Its important traditions must be valued, while focusing on the areas where it can improve, develop, and change. The next Head of School will be passionate about the education of girls and possess the following personal and stylistic qualities:

- Visible, accessible
- Community-builder, connector
- A leader and team builder
- Listener who seeks and acknowledges input
- Collaborator
- Spirited
- Transparent
- Positive
- Embraces challenge, resilient
- Manages change
- Cultural competent
- High EQ, self-aware
- Personable, likable, good sense of humor



## To APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates should submit electronically in one email and as *separate* documents (preferably PDFs) the following materials:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position
- A current résumé
- A one-page statement of educational philosophy and leadership practice
- A list of five (5) professional references with name, phone number, and email address of each (*references will be contacted only with prior candidate approval*) to:

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