



# New Faces on Campus

## The Emerging Scholars Program

**E**arly every Saturday morning during the school year, Episcopal's technology center is filled with lively and curious 9-, 10-, and 11-year olds and their teachers. The 16 students, who were selected as the first group in the Emerging Scholars Program, are very familiar with the campus because they spent seven weeks at EHS over the summer in an academic enrichment program designed to prepare them to attend an independent school. Executive Director Alvarez LeCesne observes, "the kids love Episcopal's beautiful, tranquil campus, well-kept facilities, and the personal support provided by faculty and staff who work hard to accommodate their needs." He is excited for the participants to interact with EHS students "who represent the kind of motivated, dedicated, and successful high school students we hope the ESP graduates will become."



As one of seven independent schools in Northern Virginia that helped launch the Emerging Scholars Program (ESP) in 2002, Episcopal is playing a major role in this exciting new educational enrichment program. ESP is designed to provide fourth and fifth grade students who have exceptional academic and leadership abilities with opportunities to fully develop their potential. The Emerging Scholars Program has two primary goals. First, to provide academic, emotional, and social support to prepare students from limited income families for success in independent schools. Second, to develop the leadership capabilities of talented people from segments of society currently under-represented in the nation's leadership pool.

### Emerging Scholars Program Consortium Member Schools

Alexandria Country Day School  
Browne Academy  
Burgundy Farm Country Day School  
The Congressional School of Virginia  
Episcopal High School  
Flint Hill School  
Green Hedges School

### A Free 14-Month Enrichment Program

ESP is modeled on the successful Prep for Prep program in New York, N.Y., that has been helping students obtain an education commensurate with their abilities and earn degrees from independent schools, colleges, and universities of their choice since 1978. In its second year of operation, the Emerging Scholars Program works hard to identify, test, and enroll a diverse group of fourth grade students from public schools in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Those selected demonstrate motivation, academic promise, strong character, and leadership potential. Their families must commit to meeting program responsibilities involved in the free 14-month enrichment program designed to prepare their children for acceptance into independent schools. ESP faculty are selected for their teaching competence, dedication to young students inside and outside the classroom, and commitment to the basic mission of ESP. The core curriculum focuses on reading, writing, research, history, math, science, foreign language, arts,

technology, and study skills. The eight-to-one student to teacher ratio enables all students to interact with their teachers on a regular basis, a benefit that independent schools offer. Selected scholars spend seven weeks in an academically rigorous summer session following their fourth and fifth grade years and attend Saturday classes during their fifth grade year to continue their development.

Episcopal is pleased to host all of the Emerging Scholars Program activities. At the end of the first extensive summer session held in 2004, the volunteer office administrator, Brenda Irons-LeCesne said, "The student's motivation to master the academic classes, develop leadership skills, and engage in character building is infectious and refreshing. What a joy it is to be in an environment where children challenge each other daily to work harder and do their best."



Emerging Scholars and their teachers enjoy an EHS classroom.

**"These 16 phenomenal kids have taken 'the road less traveled.' They have given up their summer to do what they do all year: go to school, and that has made all the difference. I have seen growth in every child in areas that I didn't know were possible."**

— Chrissy Little, teachers' aide

## An Investment in the Future

ESP is a non-profit organization run by one full-time professional, the executive director, who is assisted by teachers, teachers aides, and a governing board comprised of senior administrators from consortium schools. This free program is made possible by donations from individuals and private foundations. In addition, Episcopal and the other six consortium schools, provide services at no cost. Any Emerging Scholar who is accepted to a consortium school will benefit from financial aid warranted by their family situation. Although graduation from ESP does not guarantee placement at an independent school, it is expected that any child who is in good standing with the program will be a strong candidate for admission, largely due to their exposure to a rigorous curriculum, individualized attention, and personal accountability. Families who participate in the Emerging Scholars Program form a unique community that will strengthen the resolve of each student to master the unfamiliar aspects of an independent school environment. The program leadership hopes that each graduate's continuing membership in ESP will promote a long-term sense of social responsibility and increase their potential for leadership. Episcopal and the other founding member schools will benefit from enrolling well-prepared students who will enhance the economic, ethnic, racial, and religious diversity of their communities. Episcopal's Director of Admissions and ESP Board Member Doug Price is excited that "we are making private school an option for a small but talented group of economically disadvantaged students." Although EHS will not add an Emerging Scholar to the student body until 2008, the Episcopal community is already benefiting from having energetic and curious fourth and fifth graders and their exceptional teachers on campus every Saturday during the school year and for seven weeks each summer. The enthusiasm and optimism of the ESP participants serve as reminders that everyone can fully realize their potential by working hard and surrounding themselves with positive and supportive people. ■



Stewart Gym served as a nice setting for Emerging Scholars to learn to play chess.

To learn more about the Emerging Scholars Program, visit [www.emergingscholarsprogram.org](http://www.emergingscholarsprogram.org)