

GILL

ST. BERNARD'S



The Unit



For more than 40 years, the spring Unit has encouraged students to use, improve and extend their knowledge and skills beyond the regular curriculum. Led by one or more teachers, students engage in project-based learning. Much of this learning is explicitly cooperative, with students organized into groups or teams to fulfill specific research and reporting goals. This arrangement offers unparalleled opportunities for interdisciplinary study as well.

Civic engagement and community service learning are core values and objectives of the spring Unit. Students motivated by issues and concerns of hunger in New Jersey, for example, research its incidence in the classroom and in the field. They volunteer at community food banks and speak with nutritionists and neighborhood civic groups as they examine reports by government commissions and private groups. They might conclude this study by developing a set of proposals to be presented to a public official or public policy group at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey or in Trenton, N.J. Other students may explore solar energy and wind energy or green landscaping and regenerative residential and commercial construction. They may write and perform plays and poetry under the guidance of playwrights and poets, finding, in the written word, imaginative ways to express their responses to the world they experience.

Students are encouraged in spring Unit courses to discover the connections of their lives to the lives of others, to explore the dynamic character of the social and natural environments that envelope all life. Frequent field trips provide opportunities to gather practical insight from interaction with public officials, scientists, business and university professionals and community leaders, as well as visit specific locations, to learn through first-hand experiences. Students apply and enhance their skills and knowledge through such guided on-site and field activities. Whether studying local environmental or social issues, from scientific study to aesthetic exploration, students are continuously challenged to discover ways they can respond to social and environmental concerns, often collaborating on proposals and projects that inform and inspire.

The spring Unit is an important element of Gill St. Bernard's curriculum and educational philosophy. It crosses disciplinary boundaries. It challenges students to think critically and practically, to offer the best of themselves in the service of others, to cooperate with others in learning and doing, and to become conscious of the world around them. In myriad ways, the spring Unit celebrates the educated imagination, the capacity in each of us to perceive the arresting beauty and endless possibilities of the world we all share. Gill St. Bernard's motto, *The World is Our Classroom*, takes on unique and exciting educational dimensions in the middle of May when the spring Unit begins.



Today's spring Unit goes back to 1973, when the St. Bernard's School for boys in Gladstone, N.J. merged with The Gill School for girls in Bernardsville. At that time, all classes were taught under the Unit Plan, one class at a time for six or seven weeks. Although this overall structure of learning ended in 1989, the present spring Unit remains its legacy.

Spring 2014 Unit Offerings

Please note that although a brief description of each Unit offering has been provided, several may not have been held in the spring.

Arts and Crafts

Exploring our Hand-Built Culture

The *Arts and Crafts* spring Unit engages students in the tools, materials and procedures responsible for items—such as ceramic pots, stained glass windows, necklaces and more—that define our daily lives. A visit to a stained glass studio will introduce participants to the fine art of glass cutting and soldering, and allow them to not only design their own sun catchers in the process, but also prepare them to complete other practical home-related projects in the future. During another visit to a jewelry-maker, students will learn to create necklaces by melting colorful glass rods into intricately designed beads. A metal-working artisan will also demonstrate skills for cutting, shaping and soldering pieces of copper, bronze and additional metals into unique rings and bracelets.



An Artful Excursion

An Artful Excursion will examine over 7,000 years of human passion and lament, frivolity and noble truth, all embodied and brought to light through various artists' skills and ingenuity. Students will travel from the galleries of Chelsea and Soho to the Guggenheim and Museum of Modern Art during this two-week Unit. They'll stroll through the Grounds for Sculpture outside Princeton, N.J. one day, and ponder the work of graffiti artists in the West Village the next, exploring the diversity of expression that makes New York City and its surroundings the epicenter of the world's artistic scene. Through a

series of day trips, along with the assistance of several guest speakers, this Unit endeavors to expose students to a vast range of art forms—from painting to sculpture, architecture to fashion.

Boats, Bridges and Towers

Boats, Bridges and Towers is a hands-on Unit that enables the application of problem-solving skills and requires real team-building, trust and competitiveness. Over the course of two weeks, students will work together in groups to complete four outdoor building and design projects, from planning to construction to evaluation. Participants will be supplied with cardboard, glue, duct tape, PVC pipe, wood, tarps and caulking on a project-by-project basis to create the best design. Bring your intuition, ingenuity and desire for fun, and see what you can build!



Chinese Arts, Crafts and Culture

In this spring Unit, students will explore Chinese art and culture first-hand. After learning to write in Chinese calligraphy—a highly-stylized form of writing—with brush pen and ink, participants will attend a Chinese calligraphy and painting exhibition. Along with discovering the historical and modern-day uses of Chinese lanterns, students will make their very own. In addition, they will review various types of Chinese dance before seeing several performances in New York City. And, no Unit concerning China would be complete without a guided tour of the diverse region's cuisine. Other topics of conversation throughout the Unit will include paper-cutting, porcelain, pottery and shadow puppetry.



Contemporary Dance

Students who select this Unit will experience the freedom of movement! Working with two instructors from the Roxey Ballet Company, a world-class contemporary ballet institution in Lambertville, N.J., participants will learn the elements of classical ballet, jazz, and modern and urban dance technique. From classical ballet movements to urban hip-hop, instructors will work to help students discover their musical interests and master their natural abilities. Students will also research the movements of world famous dancers and choreographers including Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham and Judith Jamison, and attend a professional dance performance at a nearby theater. As a culminating project, each student will choreograph and perform a dance piece of his or her own creation.



“The Unit trips I took throughout high school have expanded my horizons dramatically. These are experiences I will never forget and will take with me for the rest of my life.”

— Sam Weisman '14

Eat...Pray...Live

This health and wellness Unit focuses on properly feeding the mind, body and spirit to adapt to a healthy lifestyle. Students will attend Yoga and meditation classes with local instructors to feed their minds. From these professionals, they will learn the benefits of exercise, not only as a means of staying physically fit but also as a means of relieving stress. Participants will also research various forms of healthy cooking and eating to feed their bodies, and prepare a nutritious three-course meal using all-natural ingredients from local farm stands. Finally, this Unit will join the United Way of Northern New Jersey in a variety of volunteer activities that benefit others and feed the soul.



Everyone Deserves a Head Start

Having the opportunity to put a smile on a child's face and make a positive impact on his or her life is a priceless experience! In this Unit, students will work together to plan classroom lessons and activities suitable for early childhood students ages three through five, fund-raise to help purchase school supplies and other learning materials for donation, and visit various Head Start locations in the area. Participants will transition from student to teacher over the course of two weeks. Activities will include creating interesting and engaging classroom activities, actively planning, organizing and promoting fund-raising events, and developing patience while working with underprivileged individuals.



Golf

A Deceptively Simple Game

Participants in Gill's *Golf* Unit will learn how to play during lessons at Twin Willows Golf Club in Lincoln Park, N.J., discuss why golf is a life-long sport and develop integrity and sportsmanship—both necessary components for mastering the game. This Unit will teach beginner golfers about a great deal more than just hitting a ball straight, as students will develop patience and etiquette, and exercise mind and body throughout the two-week program. An overview of the golf industry will be explored during visits to public and private area-courses including Neshanic Valley Golf Course in Branchburg, N.J. In addition, history and rules of the game will be covered during a field trip to the United State Golf Association Museum in Far Hills, N.J.



Hiking, Biking and Kayaking

Those who enjoy learning in an outdoor setting are sure to love this Unit, as participants will hike in some of the area's most scenic locations, oftentimes climbing hundreds of feet to enjoy spectacular views. Along with being physically pushed to the limit, students will challenge their minds by exploring the geology and ecology of the Northeastern United States. When not busy peddling on mountain bikes, students will paddle in kayaks to several locations, offering an up-close look at Mother Nature.



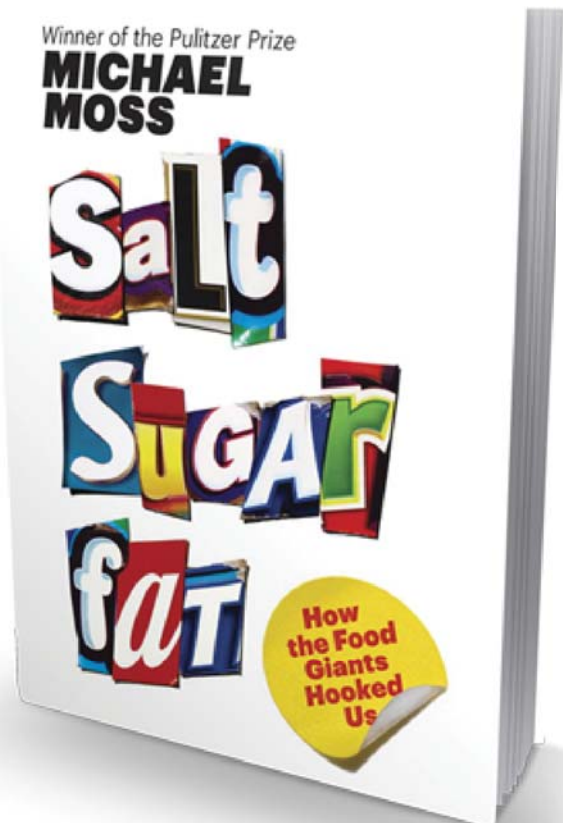
How do Places Work?

From the systems that deliver water direct to homes and businesses to the persons who organize public events for thousands of citizens, students will receive an inside look at those facilities and individuals responsible for keeping cities and towns in working order. Forming groups, students will evaluate the mechanics behind important services such as public transportation and meet with public officials including firemen and police officers to learn the ins and outs of each career.

How Sweet it is

The Impact of Sugar on Our Lives

This Unit will examine the socio-historical as well as nutritional and economic effects sugar has had on the United States and its population. Students will study candy production and sweet flavorings during corporate visits, make tasty, sweet and healthy treats using natural sweeteners, and assemble as well as send food packages to troops overseas. A companion book for this Unit will be *Sugar, Salt and Fat* by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Michael Moss.



Interior Design

The profusion of shelter magazines, television shows and Internet spaces such as Pinterest provide deep inspiration for renovation projects, from crafting a workspace that spurs creativity to designing a bedroom where one can calmly end each day. This spring Unit will introduce students to the history of interior design and show its practical applications. Speakers will include interior designers, architects, color experts and other professionals who work to create visually appealing spaces. Workshops will allow students to explore what makes a design “work,” while a series of field trips will enable participants to observe design principles and create their own decorating scheme based on an apartment floor-plan. Each group will later present its final design to a panel of judges, who will offer critical feedback.



Knight Tank

Knight Tank will provide students with a look into the world of entrepreneurship, leadership and success. Based on ABC’s *Shark Tank*, *Knight Tank* will require that each student begin the process of inventing a product or service inspired by one’s own passions and review the steps for bringing it to market. Throughout the two week course, students will create a business plan, assess the qualities of a successful entrepreneur and learn to file for a patent. In addition, they will review the success stories of 10 young entrepreneurs who made it big in the face of today’s daunting market and meet

with local business leaders including a banker, venture capitalist and more. As a culmination of the Unit, students will later present their own business plans before a panel of experts.



“The Unit was one of my favorite parts of the school year—a time to find new adventures and discover new interests that I never knew existed.”

— Kimberly Lindquist '13

A Little Bit of France

Students in this Unit will travel to New York City and other local venues to discover the French arts, music, foods and culture available in their own backyards. In addition to sampling French cuisine and touring local museums, students will read and discuss a French book with fellow Unit participants. Other on-campus activities will include preparing a few French recipes and watching foreign films. The group will also discuss the influence French culture has or has not had on American culture and vice versa.



Medicine and Healthcare

This Unit is for students who have an interest in or are considering a career in the dynamic and exciting field of medicine and healthcare. Throughout the Unit, participants will learn about the various aspects of medicine and healthcare during field trips to local hospitals and trauma centers, as well as from guest speakers. In addition, students will undergo CPR training and certification, observe surgery and encounter other life-changing experiences to determine whether working in this rapidly-changing profession could become their future career.

“I’d always known I wanted to be an elementary school teacher, but had been strongly advised to find out what it was really like before committing to the career. Having the opportunity to student teach in the ‘Elementary Unit’ my sophomore year was a gift that has had a lasting impact on my future.”

— Carly Meyers ’14

Painting with Words

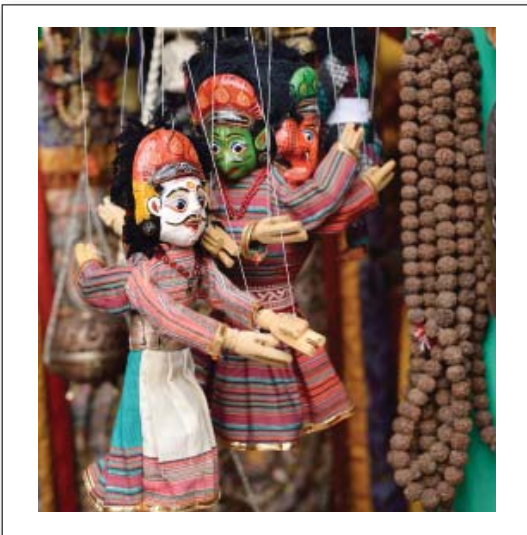
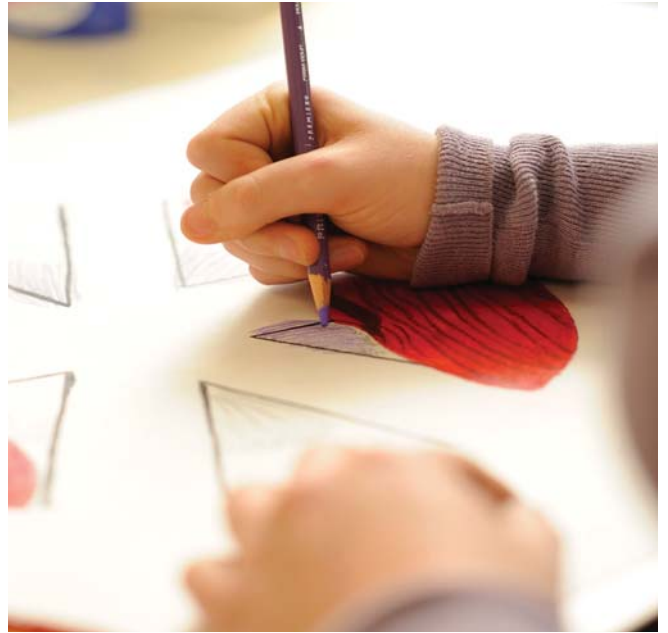
The Intersection of Imagination and Verbal Expression

This course, designed for serious writers of poetry, fiction and creative non-fiction, will deepen students’ experiences and understandings of the process of producing art with words. Participants will hone their skills of expression through visiting writers, skills exercises, local trips to image-rich environments, and supportive and constructive workshops. Each writer will later create a portfolio of work produced throughout the Unit.



Experience in Contemporary Art

Experience in Contemporary Art is designed for students who wish to work in professional art settings, create art and visit area museums and galleries, including the Museum of Modern Art and Guggenheim, for inspiration. It is for those looking to expand their knowledge and experiences by exploring art-making for an uninterrupted period of time. This Unit includes drawing and painting, graphic design, photography and printmaking, and covers the many issues contemporary artists face today. Students will work in local institutions such as the Print Center of New Jersey and Center for Contemporary Art. In addition, they will participate in the TOMS® shoe campaign, *One for One*, to create an original pair of shoes. They will also work with artists as well as hear from docents and curators about the process of hanging art for public display.



Children's Puppet Theater

During this Unit, students will plan a production—including writing a story or rendering a favorite tale from their childhood—build puppets depicting people, animals or buildings, assemble a mobile theater, and perform a puppet show for toddlers at daycare centers and elementary schools nearby. To gain some inspiration, participants will visit the full-service production studio Puppet Heap in Hoboken, N.J., where they will take a tour of the facilities and meet with professional puppet-makers. In addition, they will attend a workshop at Puppet Kitchen© in New York City and make their own unique characters. This trip will also include a live performance by Puppetworks, Inc.

The Receiving in the Giving

Students will encounter uplifting and rewarding experiences over the course of this spring Unit. Participants will be required to contact agencies and implement their own service project with help from fellow peers. Potential ideas range from creating a texture book (a book filled with various shapes made from materials like velvet, grass, yarn and seashells, and labeled in Braille) for children at a facility for the blind to donating simple yet costly items such as dog and cat food, blankets and toys to a local animal shelter. *The Receiving in the Giving* Unit will also include visits from guest speakers who often work as volunteers. These individuals will provide students with a better look at dedicating one's life to serving others.





“The Unit program is nothing less than incredible! It reinforces the important idea that at Gill St. Bernard’s the world is truly our classroom and that there are valuable lessons to be learned on and off campus.”

— Katherine Giordano '14

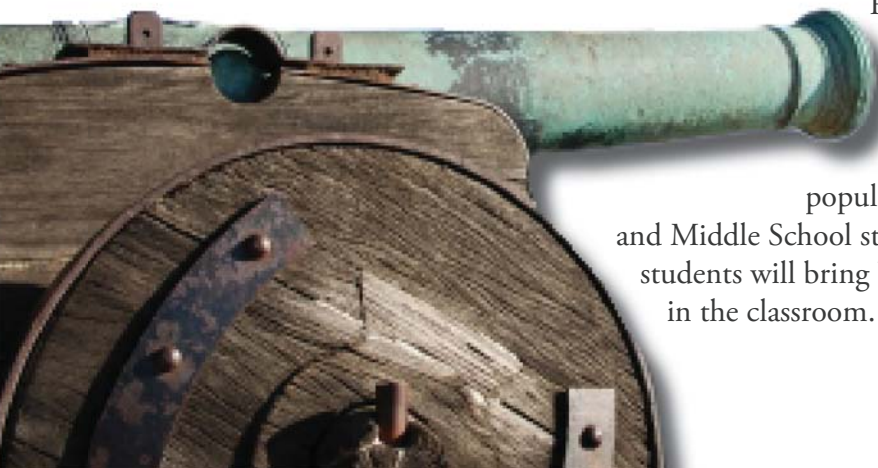
Sports Broadcasting with NBC Anchor Bruce Beck

This on-campus spring Unit will allow students to learn the fundamentals of sports broadcasting from NBC’s nine-time Emmy Award-winning anchor Bruce Beck. With help from Mr. Beck and his team of professionals, students will meet with well-known broadcasters from the tri-state area, gain insight into game day coverage and receive an insider’s look at behind-the-scenes activities. Participants will also explore the entertaining and dynamic field of sports talk radio, learn to write for both television and radio, and discover techniques for reading off a teleprompter during on-camera presentations. All material will be captured using state-of-the-art audio and video equipment, and each student will receive a professionally produced DVD documenting his or her work.



Revolutionary War in New Jersey

From Washington Rock State Park to Jockey Hollow and Washington’s Crossing, New Jersey is home to many Revolutionary War sites. This Unit will explore the history of the American Revolution in New Jersey through research, field trips and film, and requires that participants work together to create a Revolutionary War video quest—a popular place-based educational experience—for Lower and Middle School students. Using on-site filming and still photography, students will bring New Jersey’s role in the American Revolution to life in the classroom.



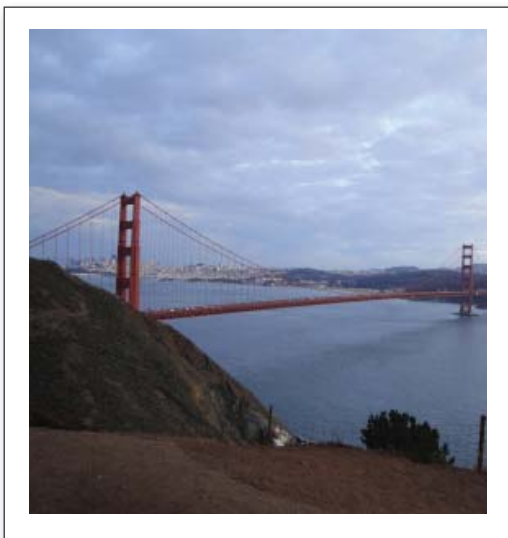
Spring 2014 Unit Travel Offerings

Students have visited nearly two dozen countries on five continents and traveled to just as many destinations in the United States.

Alaska

The Last Frontier

Alaska is home to 17 of the highest peaks in the United States, over 3,000 rivers, more than one million lakes and an estimated 100,000 glaciers. Its national parks include brown bear, caribou, moose, porcupine, red fox, wolves and other animals. Students will travel by land and by sea to *Alaska, The Last Frontier*. Participants will journey from Anchorage to Seward to visit Kenai Fjords National Park. Led by two guides, the group will stop to hike along the way, and spend two nights at the Alaska Sea Life Center, where it will learn about wildlife veterinarians and discover how invasive species can alter the environment. One day will also be spent aboard a wildlife viewing vessel, where students will search for whales, sea otters, the endangered Steller sea lion and Dall's porpoise, and colonies of nesting sea birds including Puffins. Upon returning to Anchorage, students will travel north to Denali National Park and Preserve for more hiking and wildlife viewing, and to visit a dog-sledding facility.



California

Silicon Valley and San Francisco

Participants in this Unit will take advantage of all that San Francisco has to offer, from scenery and history to science and—most importantly—technology. San Francisco and Silicon Valley are home to many innovative companies such as Pandora, Google and Nest Labs. Students will meet and speak with several GSB alumni working in this ever-growing field, as well as visit various organizations to determine that which it takes for a startup to succeed. Along the way, the group will encounter several San Francisco landmarks including Fisherman's Wharf, Alcatraz and the Golden Gate Bridge. While touring the California coastline, students will also stop at Point Reyes National Seashore to dip their toes in the Pacific and catch a glimpse of the giant redwoods at Muir Woods National Monument.

Metal Head

Blacksmithing in a Modern World

The blacksmith, or devoted metal craftsman that was once relied on so heavily to produce metal goods, has disappeared from society to some extent. This Unit aims to explore the world of metalwork and, specifically, the role of the blacksmith in today's automated and plasticized world. Students will visit devoted galleries featuring the work of blacksmiths, learn about the trade and art from real-life blacksmiths and become amateur "metal heads" themselves. From these professionals, students will learn how to fire a forge, hammer out shapes, hand-oil and finish a product. In their first week

of the Unit, participants will explore various studios, exhibits and displays throughout the tri-state area. They will then spend five days at Camp Deerwood in central New Hampshire, where many renowned blacksmiths including Dave Little and Rob Hudson have practiced their craft for several decades.



Santa Fe, New Mexico

Art, Culture and History

This spring Unit travels to Santa Fe, New Mexico for one week of immersion in both Spanish and Native art, culture and history. Students will engage in the same creative endeavors that have made Santa Fe a favorite destination among artists, selecting from a group of workshops led by some of the most accomplished artists in the city. For two days, participants will learn to work with oil and acrylic paint on canvas, tin, encaustic techniques, clay and pencil. While visiting Chaco Canyon and Taos, students will encounter a world of cities built centuries ago in the stunning yet arid landscape

as well as the outdoor Adobe-brick beehive ovens still used to fire pottery and bake bread today. Participants will also climb The Acoma Pueblo (City of the Sky)—the stony mesa 400 feet above the valley floor—and wander among some of the most iconic Native architecture in America.



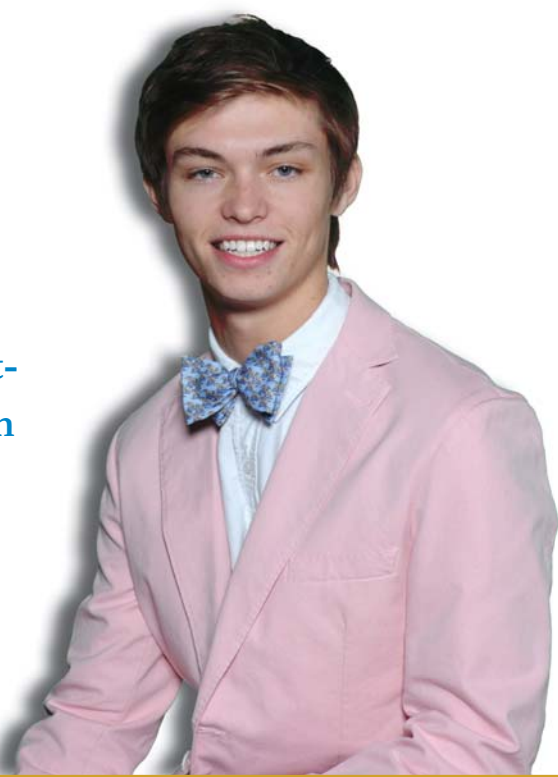
Oh, Canada!

One objective of this Unit is to explore the culture, history, architecture, cuisine and geography of Canada, a country not well-known or understood by most Americans. GSB's stay in Montréal will include lodging at the world-class McGill University—where students will tour its Redpath Museum and distinctive science programs—as well as the exploration of centuries-old French heritage along the cobbled streets of Old Montréal. Participants will also visit the McCord Museum of Canadian History and take a tour of Notre Dame Cathedral. Atop Mount Royal, the city's panoramic peak, students will be able to scan the horizon all the way to the Laurentian Mountains. Other outdoor activities will include biking along the Montréal waterfront, an evening "ghost walk" in the old city and jet-boating on the Lachine Rapids.



“I am forever grateful for the experiences I had during the GSB Unit to Guatemala. I got a first-hand look at a culture completely different than that of my own, and learned a tremendous amount about myself in the process.”

— Dylan Polachi '14



From Houses to Homes in Guatemala

This Unit presents an opportunity to share knowledge, skills and resources with those in desperate need of them, while contributing to a more just world. In cooperation with the New Jersey-based nonprofit organization *From Houses to Homes*, participants in this spring Unit will work with disadvantaged families living near Antigua, Guatemala to help construct 13x19-foot homes made of concrete blocks and a metal roof. Prior to departing for Guatemala, students will engage in fundraising activities to collect those items needed for workers and families. In addition to building homes, students will visit the community's medical clinic and the Montessori

School, an institution founded by *From Houses to Homes*, where they will work in classrooms with teachers and staff. They will also take an informative and historic walking tour of the city, hike to one of three volcanoes surrounding the city, attend Salsa lessons and soccer games, and visit a premier coffee plant equipped with a zip-line trip through its trees. Participants will stay with host families throughout their time in Guatemala, as a means of experiencing their lives and customs first-hand.

The Emerald Isle

Students in this Unit will experience the culture of Ireland, a country steeped in history and boasting a rich display of art and magnificent landscapes. The trip will begin with a two-night stay in the capital city of Dublin, where students will see the famous *Book of Kells* at Trinity College and explore the National Museum of Archaeology to learn more about the country's rich heritage. In Killarney, students will visit the Kerry Folklife Centre and travel to the legendary Ring of Kerry, also stopping in Bog Village for a live reenactment of life in 19th century Ireland. In addition, students will explore the medieval ruins of Blarney Castle and kiss the famous Blarney Stone. From Killarney, the group will journey to Bunratty Castle & Folk Park, a restored medieval village in County Clare. Participants will also visit the beautiful Cliffs of Moher and Burren Wild, rising 700 feet above the coastline, and explore the boisterous city of Galway.



“Through the Unit, I really embraced GSB’s motto ‘The World is Our Classroom,’ and got the chance to visit some truly amazing countries that inspired me to see what else the world has to offer.”

— Caitlyn Dougher '10



Iceland

Fire and Ice

Students will explore Iceland, including some of the most impressive natural wonders of the world—from thundering waterfalls and smoldering volcanoes to slow-flowing glaciers and gushing geysers—during this spring Unit. Participants will take a bicycle tour of Reykjavik, the world’s northernmost capital, experience the midnight sun and soak in the mineral-rich waters of the Blue Lagoon. Just off the coast, they will search for whales and admire colonies of Puffins nesting on cliff tops. And, during the “Golden Circle” tour, all will witness the stunning beauty of southern Iceland, including the spectacular Gullfoss waterfall, The Great Geysir and historic Thingvellir National Park. In addition to touring all of these wonderful places, and more, students will learn the ways in which Iceland powers its cities and heats its homes using hydroelectricity and geothermal resources.

They will also investigate the development of hydrogen fuel stations, which may

someday lead to more practical zero-emission vehicles.



Volunteer in Panama

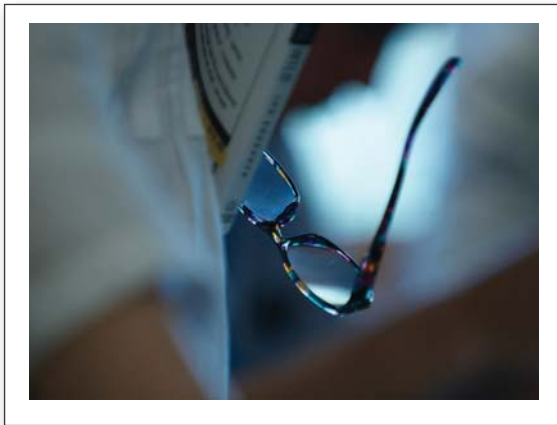
Give & Surf Nonprofit

Participants in this spring Unit will work with the nonprofit organization, *Give & Surf*, in Bahía Honda, Panama to provide the Ngöbe Indians—a people suffering from the encroachment of commercial farming, mining and corporate tourism—with education and community development opportunities. During the trip, student-volunteerism will range from working with three- through five-year-old preschool students to assisting with *Give & Surf*’s many construction projects. To prepare for the Unit, students will research the culture and living conditions of the Ngöbe people, and raise funds to deliver drastically-needed resources and supplies. While in Panama, students will reside at the Palmar Tent Lodge on Bastimentos Island and also take part in surfing, snorkeling and hiking as well as cave and boat tours.



Exchange Program with Fyrisskolan *Uppsala, Sweden*

Several years ago, Gill St. Bernard's established a student and teacher exchange program with Fyrisskolan, a secondary school in Uppsala, Sweden. This relationship developed through GSB's Scientific Literature Review—an Upper School program requiring that students learn the importance and practical applications of guided inquiry research. While in Sweden, participants will live with the families of students attending school in Fyrisskolan. These same children also visited the Gill St. Bernard's campus in late-October. During their stay, students will travel to the oldest historic settlement in Scandinavia, Gamla Uppsala, stopping at a 10th century church in the old city and by the University of Uppsala—one of Europe's premier universities founded in 1477. Students will also spend four days in Stockholm, one of the greatest capital cities in all of Europe. Built on 14 islands, Stockholm is home to the Swedish Academy by which Nobel Prizes in literature are annually awarded, the location of the 16th century warship Vasamuseet and the site of Drottningholm Castle. Students will also visit Swedish Parliament and other centers of art, culture and history.



Independent Study

The option for independent study is exclusively offered to senior students, except in rare cases when a junior may encounter a unique opportunity. Students who qualify for independent study may pursue intensive study in an academic or professional area of interest under the guidance of a teacher or, when appropriate, cooperating professional. To be considered for the independent study program, students must submit a two-page explanation of their intended topic, internship or experiential learning experience. Part of the final project

should also include an annotated bibliography of at least 10 sources.

“The GSB Unit triggers a love for life and inspires you to do more than you thought was possible.”

— Emily Western '15





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