

9/29/2022

A NEW GATHERING PLACE



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Saint Peter's faculty and students have a new place to gather outdoors thanks to a donation of five repurposed benches. The Giron family obtained the benches from a local hotel that was looking to discard them. They were worn down, with peeling paint, but the family saw the potential and spent several months restoring and refinishing them before donating them to the school. Made of sustainable teak wood planks on metal frames, each bench is now customized with the Saint Peter's logo, installed by the Girons. With the help of several parents during the School Clean-Up Day, the benches were installed in a semi-circle outside of the breezeway, creating a new space where classes can gather for reading, music, snack time, and more. Future plans for the space, being developed by the school's Green Team, include planting a ground cover with stepping stones and some larger landscaping in lieu of the wood chips; installing rain barrels for irrigation of the space; and installing some form of sun/rain protection.

"We hope the benches can become an outdoor gathering place for the school and parish community. Spending time outside has so many positive benefits for physical and mental well-being; and if you get kids outside at a young age, they learn to appreciate the outdoors and are more inclined to take care of it," said Margaret Giron.

Having students spend more time outdoors is just one of the initiatives of Saint Peter's Green Team, a group of parents and faculty that leads the school's sustainability efforts. Last year, the group organized the Student Sustainability Club, where middle-school students learned about energy and water conservation and participated in projects including a school grounds clean-up and installing energy-saving informational signs in the classrooms. The team is working on several more green initiatives this year, with the goal of becoming a certified Maryland Green School.

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