

SCHOOL PROFILE: STORM KING SCHOOL by Brian Fisher, AdmissionsQuest, Inc.

Storm King School recently revisited its principles and covenants with an eye toward the future, seeking to insure that the institution and its members practice the values and principles that the school believes paramount to positive growth experiences.

Storm King School - asking, “Who are we? To what ideas and principles do we commit ourselves and how do we commit ourselves to each other?” - emerges a vibrant, grounded community committed to participation by all members. Storm King wants its graduates to take the risks of trying new experiences and gaining awareness of community connectedness as part of their lives. All this is considered important even though the primary need is for students to address the skills and knowledge necessary for a college preparatory program.

Academic Connection

Focusing on students’ academic experiences, Associate Head, Helen (Steevie) Chinitz, explains “The School’s commitment needed to be that there was, from its faculty members, the most intelligent and sensitive academic delivery.” The school purposefully seeks and hires faculty who approach their subjects from a variety of perspectives, whether in the arts or in traditional academic courses.


Storm King believes that every student will find a meaningful connection within the faculty. “Gosh, one star or another is going to catch the student, as will some discipline among the different offerings that we have. It will click. I know that there will be somebody on our campus with whom a student will genuinely connect,” believes Ms.Chinitz.

Confidence Through Risk

Committed to teaching, risk-taking, and connectedness through all facets of its program, Storm King expects all students to try, and to learn from, diverse and new experiences. Institutional commitment to visual and performing arts and athletics is essential to encourage students at Storm King. Success in one area, Ms.Chinitz argues, makes it easier for a student to say, “I’ll give it a try,” when facing a new challenge. “It (risking new experiences) is definitely at the heart of a lot at the school.” Confidence and personal growth result from participation in a total school life.

Credibility: Everyone Participates

Communal participation creates an environment in which exploration of new areas becomes admired and safe. At Storm King, Ms.Chinitz tells us that “every



single person, every administrator, every student, every faculty member,” participates. With all community members involved, students feel the confidence and support that allow them to venture beyond themselves. This web of belief and support binds Storm King students into a cohesive body in which individuals root for each other as they explore the world.

This support of each other stands as an essential value within the Storm King community. Ms.Chinitz says, “I very much care that they (students) learn to be... I’m proudest when I can recommend a student and say that this is someone who knows himself/herself and knows how to be generous to others.”

The Sit Down Meal Binds

Sharing with each other has also become an integral part of the community at Storm King. The school recently returned to having a Monday evening formal sit-down dinner to begin the week. Each Monday evening at 6 PM, students and faculty- males in jacket and tie, women dressed appropriately- gather for a sit-down meal in assigned seats. Students sit, eat, and share with community members whom they may not know well; the pace is leisurely; and the community shares, participates, and binds itself for the coming week.

Ms. Chinitz says, “It has been so successful and it has released all sorts of skills and attitudes that nothing else could have accomplished quite this way. Within this, we’ve seen people who’ve never talked before beginning to connect and chat. It’s working in wonderful ways. It gives a tone to the week.”

Communicating the Message

Campus visits show off the life and diversity of offerings at the school. Storm King brings visitors to campus as often as they can. Ms.Chinitz relates the story of one recent campus visitor. “We just had a newspaper reporter come to spend a full day seeing us- invited by a student who had this as part of a history project. She (student) took him to all her classes. Miraculously, wonderful things happened that we hadn’t planned. He wrote a long article in the local newspaper about it - just giving an account of what his day was like. It went on forever. It was who we are. We were delighted.”

Focused Admission

A change in admission profiles has accompanied the school’s focus within its mission. Storm King has tightened its admission criteria by focusing on the candidates whom, the admission committee believes, are a good fit- even with the pressure of filling the school.

Like its mission and practice, Storm King remains committed to admission risks similar to those that the school asks of students. Storm King looks for those students ready to commit themselves to the active participatory life of a small school.



Please contact the admission office for more information:

Storm King School
Admission Office 314 Mountain Road
Cornwall-on-Hudson, NY 12520
Phone: 800-225-9144/845-534-9860
Fax: 845-534-4128
Email: admissions@skis.org
Website: <http://www.skis.org>