

# **F.Y.I.**

at  
**The Caedmon  
School**

## **FACES of Diversity at Caedmon**

*“By embracing our differences, we will come to recognize the hopes, fears, sorrows, and joys we have in common...”*

### **Cultural Diversity**

Caedmon is surrounded by many cultures in Manhattan and is blessed with an extraordinary level of international and cultural diversity in its student body.

Typically, 25% of our children are not Americans and come from as many as twenty-five different nations of the world. Our proximity to the United Nations, combined with a strong reputation overseas, has led many international families to learn of Caedmon while still in their homeland.

### **Racial Diversity**

Fully one-third of our students are children from racially diverse families, whether Hispanic, Asian, or African-American. With the help of the school’s parent-driven diversity initiative, “Faces of Diversity”, efforts are ongoing to bring more children and faculty of color into our community.

### **Spiritual Diversity**

Though founded by Catholic families as a lay-Catholic school, Caedmon has always welcomed families of all faiths. A major part of the library curriculum is the study and exploration of major world religions and spiritual philosophies. The same spiritual curiosity carries over into the classrooms, where festivals and religious holidays from around the world are frequently celebrated, often with the help of parents who visit to share their traditions and spiritual perspective.

In 2002, the Leading Edge Recognition program of The National Association of Independent Schools recognized The Caedmon

School in the category of Curriculum Innovation, for its program of annual multicultural holiday plays. For over a decade, these original, musical shows have brought together many of the world’s religious and cultural traditions under a common theme, where they can be celebrated by the entire school community.

In these ways and others, Caedmon creates and celebrates a school-wide attitude of religious curiosity, and sincere multi-spiritualism.

### **Physical Diversity**

Although Caedmon is not a special education school, over the years it has regularly welcomed children with a variety of physical limitations into the mainstream classroom. Children with conditions such as hearing impairments, fragile X syndrome, cystic fibrosis, cerebral palsy, and fatal allergies have all been rewardingly integrated into the Caedmon program, often in collaboration with organizations such as The Cook Foundation and Lighthouse International.

It has been the experience of Caedmon teachers, parents, and children alike, that these children bring tremendous growth and awareness into our classrooms and community. The children especially come to understand at an early age that physical diversity, like all diversity, is a gift to be embraced and explored.

### **Intellectual Diversity**

Caedmon’s commitment to providing children with “the skills they will need

to achieve academic excellence” is an essential aspect of its mission. The school is unwavering in its efforts to challenge children with superior potential. At the same time, it is our stated desire that “...our children will grow to take command of their natural gifts with a greater understanding of our complex world and their eventual role within it.”

In this way, Caedmon acknowledges that intellectual talent is only one of the many paths by which children may grow to achieve their own happiness and contribute meaningfully to the world. With a faculty that embraces multiple learning styles, and a curriculum that encourages creativity, learning at one’s individual pace, and conceptual understanding, Caedmon seeks to develop the “natural gifts” of its children, whatever those gifts may be.

### **Economic Diversity**

With its roots as a village-oriented, community school, Caedmon goes to great lengths to maintain a culture rich in varied socio-economic points of view, in order that the environment in which we teach and learn should be a realistic reflection of society.

Key to this goal is the decision by the school’s Trustees to keep tuition costs as low as possible. They accomplish this in large part thanks to the generosity of parents and alum families during our Annual Giving Campaign.

Also crucial are the Laffin Fund and the Elizabeth Crawford Connelly Scholarship that, along with an annual budget for financial aid, enable Caedmon to offer need-

based scholarships to many families each year.

Financial aid, however, cannot alone create true economic diversity. Nor does income alone determine a family’s attitude toward privilege and social responsibility. For these reasons, Caedmon cultivates a community-wide desire that our school environment should provide for our children the full spectrum of social and economic viewpoints and experience.

### **Family Diversity**

The growing variety of family structures and lifestyles that permeate our modern society is not only evident at Caedmon, but also welcomed, supported, and celebrated. Single parents, working parents, interracial parents, adoptive parents, gay and lesbian parents, and parenting grandparents, all find at Caedmon a community in which the common concern for our children’s growth and well-being is the only essential family value.

Examples include:

- Early Program and Kindergarten children exploring “What Makes a Family” as part of their lesson plan.

- Parents of adopted children from other cultures obtaining advice and support from our very own international families.

- The PA providing child-minding services during volunteer activities.

- Families with professional work schedules benefiting from the oldest after-school childminding program in the city among independent schools.

In every way possible, The Caedmon School seeks to acknowledge, validate, and support the practical challenges and personal choices involved in raising a family within our ever- changing society.

## **The Diversity Statement of The Caedmon School**

“As our world becomes evermore inter-dependent and our society more culturally diverse, we are determined that The Caedmon School community should reflect that connectedness and diversity. We honor and actively explore the varied backgrounds and traditions that are represented among us. We cultivate an environment in which emotional bonds are forged across potential barriers of language and culture, physical and intellectual difference, or social and economic disparity.

“At Caedmon, the endless variety of human society, culture, talent, and personality is explored throughout the curriculum, sought out and welcomed through admissions and hiring, and celebrated in the daily life of our school.

“At the core of all our efforts lies the desire that each and every child and adult at Caedmon should grow with an inherent sense of their own identity and worth.

We believe that only through such self-awareness, in an environment that is rich in human variety, will we be able to recognize and value the different, yet equally precious identity and worth of those around us.

Our trust is that, by embracing our differences, we will come to recognize the hopes, fears, sorrows, and joys we have in common, and so perpetuate true community.”