



April 6, 2023



Dear Madeira Community,

It is with immense gratitude that I write this letter to you. The love and warmth that I felt from everyone that I met during my short few days on campus made me want to be a part of it! It says a lot about a school to be only the 11th head of a school which was founded 117 years ago. I walk in the footsteps of great leaders, and I hope to continue that legacy as I start my new role.

I am going back home not only to a city where I grew up but also to a community at Madeira that feels like home. Home is not only where my loved ones and friends are located but it's also a place that brings me warmth and comfort. I define home as a place where students are curious and confident to ask questions that deepen their own learning. Home is a place where the faculty, staff, and administrators work collaboratively to support our students and are lifelong learners themselves. Home is a place where parents and alums work in effective partnerships with the school. I have spent the past 30 years building communities that have become home to me and to our students, parents, faculty, and staff. I believe that everyone thrives in communities where they feel safe and have a sense of belonging, and I have devoted my career to creating these caring and inclusive communities.

Our students are the reason I continue to do this work. "Launching women who change the world" has been my own motto ever since I left Smith College. The opportunities that Smith gave to me were ones that I hope to also be able to provide for young women. This is the reason I became a teacher in the first place. Women are the changemakers of the world, and Madeira is the launching pad of this work.

I know that I would not have this opportunity without the support of my family, my friends, and my colleagues. I have had wonderful role models in my heads of school

from whom I have learned a lot over the past 30 years including Pam Clarke, Sr. Anne Dyer, Catherine Karrels, and Marjo Talbott. Landis Green, my current Head of School at Wildwood, is one of my mentors and friends who has played a significant role in preparing me for my journey to Madeira. Landis gives women leaders the opportunity to grow and launch into this next step in their careers. Landis was the first person to introduce me to some of Lucy Madeira's quotations. Every time he invokes her wisdom, I feel moved beyond words. In his welcome letter on Wildwood's website, he uses this quotation from Miss Madeira:

"The excuse of a private school in a democracy is that it shall be a laboratory, a place for the demonstration of old experiments and the trying of new. It is a place of freedom."

This is the reason I have stayed in independent schools. The four schools that I have been blessed to be a part of have helped me grow because of the freedom that they gave me to explore and to innovate in ways that cannot happen in other educational institutions. That support has helped the schools that I have served in ways beyond measure and the result of this work is seen in all our students who are making positive changes in the world today.

Let me end with another one of Miss Madeira's quotations that I saw throughout my tour on campus:

"Function in disaster, finish in style, and remain calm at the center of your being."

This is how I have always lived my life, but never has this been truer than the past few years. I love that Miss Madeira quipped these wise words to help me name how we have survived over this unprecedented time. Aren't we all masters of functioning in disaster while having a smile on our faces? I love this quotation because it gives us permission to name the disaster and gives us permission to believe that we will get through it. These next few months are going to be full, but I know that all of you will be helping me in this transition, so I thank you ahead of time for giving me time to get acclimated.

I look forward to getting to know you as I sit around the tables in the dining hall, join you in classrooms around the Oval, cheer you on from the sidelines at the Hurd, stand in celebration after a performance at the Chapel/Auditorium, and get to know generations of graduates who have sustained Madeira. I can't wait to join you this summer!

Warmly,



Christina Kyong