



## A Safe and Sacred Space for STEM Students

**Viridian worked with the Academy of Notre Dame de Namur and SMP Architects to transform a neglected garden into a safe and sacred outdoor classroom supporting STEM education and the school's mission to inspire young women.**

### Redefining a Campus Landmark

The Riley Center is a state-of-the-art STEM education building that blends traditional classroom spaces with innovative learning labs and breakout spaces. Realizing a key part of the school's long-term master plan, the building creates a prominent public-facing campus edge and encloses its primary quad. These new boundaries are defined by outdoor gathering spaces created by Viridian, including a much-loved but underused rose garden that we reimagined as a versatile outdoor classroom.

### A Landscape for Learning and Growing Together

Students access the walled rose garden from the heart of the new building, and we worked closely with SMP to create a seamless connection between indoors and out. Developed around a central axis extending from the building, we designed spacious plazas at the front and rear of the new building, and an ADA-accessible amphitheater in the rose

garden, creating inviting gathering spaces that will help foster a sense of community at Notre Dame. Large beds of native plants reintroduced rose bushes, while six new redbud trees will grow to shade the seating area to make outdoor learning an option on even the sunniest days.

### Bolstering the character of a historic campus

The hardscaping elements complement the character of the new building, which was inspired by the existing campus architecture. We restored the garden's historic stone walls, integrating a new water feature that creates trickles and mists to cool the space and create ambiance. Inspired by ancient religious grottos, a statue of the Virgin Mary anchors the garden, reminding visitors that this is a sacred space for contemplation and learning. Beyond the boundaries of the rose garden, we planted new oak trees that will support the long-term beauty and resilience of this historic campus.

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**Location:** Philadelphia, PA  
**Client:** Academy of Notre Dame de Namur  
**Size:** XX  
**Cost:** \$XXX  
**Status:** Completed 20XX