

THE GAEIL

The Newsletter for Alumni and Parents of St. Mary's/Kennedy Catholic High School

Volume 14 – Fall 2012

Queens of the Court

Volleyball Wins 1st Sectional Crown

There were games and sets, but no match for coach Ellen Casey P'12 and the varsity volleyball team in 2012, as the girls helped christen Kennedy's newly refurbished gymnasium with their third-consecutive league title and first Section 1 championship in program history. Way to go, Lady Gaels!



**KENNEDY
CATHOLIC
HIGH SCHOOL**

*Founded as St. Mary's
High School 1924-1966*



President's Page

December 2012



Dear Gaels and Kennedy Supporters,

First, I want to wish a very Merry Christmas to all Gaels and Friends of Kennedy Catholic. Heading into the holidays, and more importantly, the Advent season when we prepare our hearts and souls for the coming of our Lord and Savior, it is right and just – as the new Mass part says – that we take time to give thanks for the many blessings we have received. And there is so much to be thankful for...

We have the gift of life, this wonderful existence that enables us to learn and do so many great things. The St. Mary's/Kennedy Catholic tradition, in particular, has been blessed with a combined 88 years of life – one spent making a difference in the lives of countless generations of Gaels. We celebrate that life as we applaud the accomplishments of our five National Merit Commended students in seniors Brendan Clair, Dennis Devey, Ryan L'Abbate, Kimberly McCarthy and Laura Spreitzer. We also celebrate that life as we remember the lives of Gaels such as Tyrell Thompson '06, a 1st lieutenant in the U.S. Army who died tragically at the end of the summer. He, his wife and his family were foremost in our thoughts and prayers when we gathered as a school community for our Mass of the Holy Spirit on Sept. 7 (*read more on Page 4*), and again when we retired his No. 21 jersey and dedicated our refurbished gym on Dec. 11.

We have the gift of generosity, and as I look back at the past few years, there is no doubt that it abounds at Kennedy. We have begun and completed a number of projects that would not have been possible without the support and volunteerism of our alumni, parents and friends. From the renovations of our auditorium, athletic fields and gymnasium (*see adjacent page*), to the influx of new technology such as iPads, donated PCs and all-new switches for our upgraded server, not to mention our new baby-grand piano, Kennedy is firing on all cylinders. As our Annual Fund has grown, topping \$100,000 two years running, we are grateful not only for the increased funding that enables us to make such substantive improvements, but the increased participation that means more and more Gaels are reconnecting with and supporting their alma mater.

We have the gift of the future, and all the hope that it affords. Ninety-two years ago, when the Sisters of the Divine Compassion first started the school that would become our beloved St. Mary's, who could have foretold that it would become so successful, such a sought-after education, that its growth would necessitate the construction of a brand-new campus in Somers. Forty-six years ago, who knew that a school which had grown up in the Archdiocese would become its own private institution, led courageously and compassionately by a board of trustees who were once the recipients of the very education they now work to ensure will be available for future generations of Gaels.

That future is bright for the Class of 2016, our freshmen who have completed but a quarter at Kennedy. If our track record is any indication, our rigorous college-preparatory curriculum will get them into the best schools in the country, earning considerable millions in scholarship along the way. The future is also bright for Kennedy, for so long as Kennedy's future is in your generous and loving hands, we will continue to complete projects that improve our infrastructure and enhance our curriculum.

We are forging a future for success. And for that, I cannot thank you enough.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Mark G. Vaillancourt, Ph.D.
President/Principal



Students Support Staten Island Relief Efforts

Student Government sprang into action last month after learning of the Hurricane Sandy devastation—students like themselves left without homes—that still exists in areas such as Staten Island, collecting more than \$3,200 that will be turned into gift cards for building supplies so families can resurrect their homes and lives. The student body also collected and donated more than 1,200 nonperishable food items.

On Nov. 19, Gabrielle D'Amato '13, Shannon Spillane '13, Natalie Burke '13, Ryan Empson '13 and John Brabazon '13 joined Father Mark Vaillancourt in hand-delivering the school's donations to the nearly 40 students at St. Joseph-by-the-Sea High School in Staten Island whose homes were destroyed by Hurricane Sandy. One such student accompanied the St. Joe's student council to receive Kennedy's donation. It was a powerful experience for our Gaels.

The Kennedy bus was then driven to the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) relief center on the south shore of Staten Island to aid the victims hardest hit by the storm. That VFW has been a national drop-off site for victim relief.

Visit www.KennedyCatholic.org/category/news for a video of the check presentation and other stories.

Timeline to Tipoff

Gaels get new gym following summer renovations



When the Gaels first came to Somers in the fall of 1968 – with apologies to the Class of 1967, which owns the distinction as the first official class to graduate from Kennedy – they played in a brand-new gymnasium adorned with the Kennedy “K” at center court, wooden roll-out bleachers and an unfolding wall that could split the gym in twain when necessary. Pictured here with Coach Edward Vreeland '54 and his 1968 varsity team are manager Chris Oberle, Alan Ross, Dennis Kayser, Bill Morehead, Denis O'Meara, Ken Dingee, Tom O'Connor, Jack Harrower, Mike Brocks, John Farrell, George Enright, John Hand and captain, Brian Davidson.

Though the floor was resurfaced biannually and the profile, Gael-head logo eventually saw its mane flow on center court, the gymnasium remained largely unchanged until 2012. During this 46-year period, the most substantive changes took place in the rafters, where Gaels added to their St. Mary's tradition by adding a number of league championship banners and a few from New York, including coach Tom Nelligan's 2004 State and Federation Championship Team.



Construction began with the dismantling of those bleachers from 1968. Many alumni waxed nostalgic on www.Facebook.com/KennedyCatholic in early June as the planks were carried outside to waiting containers.

After the hardwood was sanded down, coats of urethane were applied as the floor was smoothed out and resurfaced.



Once the floor was ready, workers began laying down the latest Matthew Walker '93 creation. The interlocking KC with sword now takes center stage on both the new multi-purpose competition field outside and the gymnasium indoors, unifying our Gael Pride.



Materials were then laid out for the construction of our new bleachers. Navy blue benches with red lettering

that spell out KCHS. Sturdy, safe and self-rolling, they provide an appropriate cheering section for what Journal News sports reporter Mike Zacchio tweeted were the area's “nicest fans.”



Finally, new cherry-stained wooden doors were installed to complete the transformation. So that today, when you walk into the Monsignor Boyle Gymnasium, you see...

...PLEASE TURN TO THE BACK COVER.

For ways you can help support our Bleacher Campaign for the renovation of our gymnasium, please visit www.KennedyCatholic.org/Gym-Renovations.



Gaels mourn the passing of Tyrell Thompson '06 Kennedy retires No. 21 jersey, dedicates renovated gym Dec. 11

As it does at the beginning of every school year, the Kennedy Catholic community gathered in prayer for its Mass of the Holy Spirit on Sept. 7. This year, however, the Gaels had a few names on their minds and people in their hearts as the inaugural First Friday Mass was celebrated: namely, Tyrell Thompson '06, Elizabeth and Robert Palladino (the mother and brother of Laura Kelly P'07), and Anthony Cartularo (the brother of Italian teacher Mario Cartularo).

The Aug. 22 death of Thompson in particular, struck Kennedy hard. The Army 1st Lieutenant was waked and buried in Arlington National Cemetery the first week of September, so the wound was still quite fresh. In his homily, Father Vaillancourt described how before there was the vaunted baseball team or the now three-time defending volleyball team, it was the hardwood Gaels who were winning state championships, led by Thompson. Though he was not assigned to Kennedy during Thompson's four years, he learned through talking to teachers and friends that Tyrell was more than just a gifted athlete. He was a scholar and a soldier, someone who made those around him better, both on and off the court.

"Tyrell's life embodied the Kennedy ideals of Courage and Compassion," Father Vaillancourt said. "Let our lives do the same."

At the Sept. 4 wake, Father Vaillancourt recalled how the West Point dean took note of how many Kennedy Catholic alumni paid their respects, and how highly they thought of Thompson. The dean said he was glad, because that was exactly how West Point felt about Tyrell.

Senator Greg Ball, who was on hand to present Kennedy with \$10,000 in bullet aid, also touched on the significance of the alumnus' life.

"As a former Air Force Officer, my heart goes out to the Thompson Family and his Kennedy Catholic community," Ball said. "My hope is that this funding will enable Kennedy to continue producing the kind of upstanding men and women, like Tyrell, who serve their country with courage and compassion."

He was a soldier and son, teammate and brother, friend and husband. And because such a loss will never be forgotten, the Gaels retired Tyrell's No. 21 jersey before the team's home opener on Dec. 11.



Tyrell Thompson '06 flying high during one of the Gaels' may runs to the Section 1 title at the Westchester County Center.



Thompson chest-bumps teammate Dan O'Connell '06 before a County Center showdown.

Photos by Alex Malecki

State Senator Greg Ball gives \$10K to Kennedy

Schools across the county welcomed students back for another academic year in September. Kennedy Catholic had the added benefit of kicking off its first full day with a check presentation by state Senator Greg Ball.

Senator Ball is no stranger to Kennedy, having partnered with its president and principal, the Rev. Mark Vaillancourt, and Yorktown Councilman Terrence Murphy, this past spring in the fight to preserve busing mileage minimums for non-public schools. Members of Ball's Citizens Advisory Council, co-chaired by Father Vaillancourt and Murphy, ventured up to Albany in April to meet with key members of the Mandate Relief Council and state their case.

"It's a pleasure to present this grant," Ball said, noting that \$10,000 was just the beginning. "As long as I'm state senator, I'll continue to deliver because this is just an amazing institution." The president was excited to receive additional funding for Kennedy's Summer School Program that serves area districts. The \$10,000 in bullet aid will go toward programs at Kennedy that impact the larger community, specifically, its Summer School, PSAT and High School Readiness programs. "For the past two years, our staff has worked hard to fill the void of summer enrichment programming in Northern Westchester," Father Vaillancourt said. "We are pleased the Senator has recognized that we, too, are 'gettin' it done.'"



Members of Student Government—Brendan Clair, Shayna Gaskins, Shannon Donohue, Gabrielle D'Amato, John Davin and Ryan Empson—receive a \$10,000 bullet-aid check from state Sen. Greg Ball at the Mass of the Holy Spirit on Sept. 7.

Photo by Jacob Bergmeier

Unfinished Business

Legacy Walkway, Sister Christopher Tree provide donor recognition

On the late Sister Christopher's wall hung a picture with this quote: "Children are always the only future the human race has. Teach them well."

Our beloved Sister Mary Christopher O'Toole, indeed all of the Sisters, always taught with an eye toward the future. Such forward thinking is how St. Mary's grew into John F. Kennedy Catholic, and how Kennedy became a private school. All the same, we cannot forget the lessons of the past, for they serve to shape our future.

That is why we wanted to remind you of two unique giving opportunities whose projects remain unfinished, but offer the chance to have your name or message exist forever in perpetuity at Kennedy.

Legacy Walkway Bricks – 2006 Pricing

What started as the Senior Gift for the Class of 2006, the Legacy Walkway is an opportunity for alumni, parents and friends of our school to leave their mark by adorning the footpath that leads from the parking lot up into the Lakeview Room (a.k.a. cafeteria). To help complete this project, we will henceforth be offering these naming opportunities at the original 2006 pricing of \$150 per brick. Your name or a short message will be sandblasted into one of the bricks that flank our footpath. Just as students ascend the Legacy Walkway each day, we hope you will help us see this project through to completion.



Sister Christopher Tree of Life – Plaques Starting at \$300

Recognizing the life and legacy of math teacher and former administrator Sister Mary Christopher O'Toole, the Tree of Life offers engraved brass plaques in the shape of leaves (\$300), acorns (\$500), stones (\$1,500) and miniature trees (\$5,000). Few who passed through the halls of St. Mary's/Kennedy Catholic were not touched by Sister Christopher's toughness, tutelage or tenderness. This is a wonderful opportunity to thank her, the Sisters and the school that provided the building blocks for your future success.



Please use the enclosed envelope to make your gift to either the Legacy Walkway or the Sister Christopher Tree of Life. Kindly check the box marked "Event" and indicate which naming opportunity you would like. Our Advancement Office will then be in touch with you regarding the wording for your brick or plaque. These giving opportunities and more are also available online at www.KennedyCatholic.MyBigCommerce.com.

Golf Classic draws 175 for largest turnout ever

Swissport Sponsors for 8th straight year

The annual Kennedy Catholic Golf Classic is one of those events you can just count on.

You can count on legacy names like Dwyer and Lucas, Duffy and Beyrer. You can count on Classes from the 70s, 80s and 90s teaming up to tee it up year after year. You can count on a shaky forecast that usually ends up being a beautiful, if not playable day.

Kennedy Catholic is also blessed to be able to count on its sponsors such as Swissport North America and Cuddy & Feder, Coral Sea Pools and Mount Kisco Honda. That type of continued support – eight years running for Swissport – is what helped make this year's Classic the largest ever, with 175 golfers spread across Centennial's 27 holes and more than 200 in attendance for dinner.

Thank you to all those who have come out over the years to make this the successful event it has become, grossing more than \$55,000 for our students. We hope we can count on you – newcomer or returnee – in October 2013.



Anthony Torchia '13 shows off his weapon of choice, a TaylorMade driver.



Tim Shea joined Class of '83 golfers John Arminio, Matt Devey and Ray Durkin.

Photos by Jacob Bergmeier

SPONSORS

Event Sponsor

SWISSPORT NORTH AMERICA
Joe & Liz Pereira P'09,'12

Cart Sponsor

CUDDY & FEDER
Dan Leary '77, Anthony Morando '01

Closest to the Pin

CORAL SEA POOLS
Anthony & Anna Torchia P'12,'13
WB ENGINEERING
Vincent Warner, P.E., P'15

Longest Drive

THE FAMILY ASSOCIATION
THE LUCAS FAMILY
Warren '72 & Susan P'98,'00,'04,'10

Putting Contest Sponsor

THE LANDTEK GROUP

Driving Range Sponsor

MOUNT KISCO HONDA
Brian & Doreen Durkin P'09,'11,'13

Hole Sponsors

North Salem Dental Care, Colonial Terrace, Squires Restaurant of Briarcliff, The Clair Family, The Tinger Family, The Dwyer Family, Safway Atlantic, The Cartaya Family, Rex & Nancy Knight, Arlene O'Rourke & Greyhound Rescue, Stephen Schmidt, Greenway General Contracting, Delfino Marketing, Cuddy & Feder LLP, Clean Air Quality Services, Crystal Blue Cleaning Service, Herff Jones, Baker Liturgical Art, Bruen Deldin Didio, Competitive Telecoms Group, Future Generation, JP McHale Pest Management Inc., Durkin Water, Summit Building, The Fleitz Family, The Smith Family, Entwistle & Cappucci, Eileen McGrath, "Uncle John", Lester McGuire, Jacob Bergmeier Photography, The David B. Vaillancourt Scholarship Fund, BNC Voice, Swissport North America

WINNERS

1st Place – 58

Brian Baker, Brian Rannagan, Mark Laderote, Bob Niebling

2nd Place – 59

Kevin Hourihan, Scott Cifieri, John Dillon, Dinard Roberts

3rd Place – 60

Larry Dwyer '61, Kevin Dwyer '72, P'07, Danny Dwyer '07, A.J. Ferraro

4th Place – 60

Matt Day '96, Mike Day, Harry Massi P'93,'99, Eamon McKeon '00

Closest to the Pin

Meadows #5 – Scott Cifieri (6'2")
Lakes #5 – Edward Capparelli (2'11")
Fairways #5 – Paul Delfino P'08,'12,'15 (2'6")

Longest Drive

Meadows #9 – Mike Petrullo P'13,'14
Lakes #7 – Dan Prunty '73
Fairways #8 – Joe Patalano

Note: Third-place tie broken by scoring on certain holes.



Memoirs of St. Mary's/Kennedy High School

By Sr. Alice Shannon (Mary Imelda)

Editor's Note: This is the third and final installment in a series of memoirs written by Sr. Alice Shannon, formerly Sr. Mary Imelda, who was the last principal of St. Mary's High School from 1963-1966 and the first principal of John F. Kennedy High School from 1966-1972.

The new building was completely air-conditioned and carpeted. It boasted a chapel named St. Mary's, a multi-level library, the latest administration area, a cafeteria overlooking the lake, and twenty classrooms. The auditorium was named for Jennie Peters in gratitude for her generosity and the gymnasium for Monsignor James Boyle, then pastor of St. Francis Parish in Mount Kisco, who had been instrumental in securing the money for the building.

We began the school year with large numbers of freshmen and sophomores. The junior and senior classes were small, as they had been at St. Mary's. In all, students numbered about 550.

The convent for the Sisters was located at the top of the hill on the same property. Construction was finally completed and the Sisters were in residence by mid-October 1967. Monsignor Mulroy moved to the Schwartz mansion, which ultimately became the official rectory for all priests assigned to Kennedy.

The cornerstone of Kennedy High School was laid that first year and the dedication and blessing took place on May 3, 1968. Robert Kennedy was chosen to give the dedicatory address, but called three days before to say he would be unable to come. Senator Kennedy was running for president at that time and had to be present for the Indiana Primary. Monsignor Edward Connors, Superintendent of the New York Archdiocesan Schools, was chosen to take his place. In a way, the change was good as the Republicans had decided to protest the Senator's presence in Westchester.

We were promised that a member of the Kennedy family would be there and ultimately, Jacqueline was chosen. I can still picture her arrival. She seemed taller than I originally had thought. She was dressed in a navy blue suit and flat shoes with blue stockings to match her suit. Her presence was awesome. She sat on the stage for the ceremony but refused to speak to the assembled crowd. Later, some students and I gave her a tour of the school and she was most gracious. The students asked her many questions about her children, Caroline and John. He was to have made his First Holy Communion the following day. Some of the Sisters had worn short habits for the first time and Mrs. Kennedy remarked how nice we looked.



An original rendering of John F. Kennedy Catholic High School by McCoy & Blair Architects.



Few recognize today that Kennedy was actually built into the side of a hill.



Kennedy Convent, the Sisters' residence, was also blessed the same day by Archbishop John Maguire. The chapel was given the name St. Francis, in memory of Cardinal Francis Spellman, who had died the previous year. Cardinal Terence Cooke, his successor, had blessed the school and incidentally, had been instrumental in purchasing the property. Before Cardinal Spellman's death, he was in charge of the finances of the Archdiocese. He was always most helpful and friendly.

When Sen. Robert F. Kennedy had to cancel to prep for an upcoming debate, former First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis was on hand to witness the dedication of John F. Kennedy Catholic High School.

'What a long, strange trip it's been'

St. Mary's Class of '62 celebrates 50th

By Tom Duggan '62

Editor's Note: St. Mary's Class of 1962 celebrated its 50th reunion Sept. 14-16 on Cape Cod. What follows is the daily report from their fun-filled weekend, which can be found online at www.StMarys62.com.

Day 1 – "It Doesn't Get Any Better Than That"

Classmates began rolling in on Thursday afternoon and by mid-day Friday we had critical mass to organize the Hospitality Suite with food, drink, memorabilia, goody bags and tunes. By 4 p.m. the Suite was filling up and by 5 p.m. was crowded with a delighted crush of SMHS grads (*one grad from '61*), spouses and significant others.

At 5:45 p.m. we cleaned up the Suite, retired to our very nice and convenient living quarters and dressed for the next event, an evening with the Capodelopos in Chatham overlooking Nantucket sound. The caravan departed at 6:20 p.m. and we arrived at Janet's spectacular home while the evening was still bright, affording an appreciation to the breathtaking vista that is Larry and Janet's envious daily experience. An overused aphorism but, truly; "It doesn't get any better than that."

For the next three-plus hours we enjoyed the view, the spacious and lovely house, the setting sun and talk, talk, talk – a really sizable turnout and an over-the-top celebration executed by Janet and Larry in gracious and spectacular fashion. At around 9 p.m., class president John Gould fired the official Class of '62 Salute from the Capodelopos' cannon (*yes, they have a cannon and John's hearing may never be the same*) over the Sound and the evening was officially deemed a success.

The caravan assembled for the return trip to Ocean's Edge, awash in good feeling and looking forward to Saturday's events and the enjoyment of this historic New England venue and all it had to offer.

Day 2 – Old Time Rock 'n' Roll

Breakfast on the Ocean Edge Terrace overlooking Cape Cod Bay, early golf, clouds/rain, clearing skies/bright sun, late golf, trips to the seaside parks and Nantucket Sound, walking, biking, lounging poolside, hot tubs. It is all here.

The early golfers got in a truncated round before the skies opened up on 12th or 13th hole. An intrepid group assembled as the rain started and left for the park excursion in rain slickers with umbrellas. But, true to the forecast, the rain and clouds gave way to a marvelously sunny afternoon and everyone enjoyed the activities they preferred, including lobster rolls and seafood for lunch.

A respectable compliment of the Class of '62 was fully assembled by Saturday morning. The count was approximately 40 SMHS grads, including Nancy Gallagher and Dayle Keegan, and about 18 spouses/significant others.

The main event, the Class Dinner, went off at 6 p.m. on a bright and warm evening, without a hitch. The Linx Pavilion was beautifully appointed, the Bruce Abbott duo played smooth jazz on sax and guitar, hors d'oeuvres were served and enjoyed and after all were assembled and getting mellow. Richie Steinacher called the Dinner to order at 7 p.m.

Various persons were noticed for their efforts in putting the Reunion together, deceased Classmates were remembered, a humble blessing was extended and dinner was served, buffet style. The food and service were excellent.

At 9 p.m. Richie again called for order and various Classmates recounted their memorable SMHS experiences in live vignettes and group pictures were assembled. The volume was turned up on some "Old Time Rock & Roll" and the final hour flew by.

The Hospitality Suite was jammed by 10:30 p.m. (*it was a short walk from the Linx venue*), wine, beer, stories and laughter flowed and it looked like some Classmates hadn't lost a step in their party moves.

An invitation to Hilton Head Island (*it might have been a challenge*) was extended by Jimmy Raynor with the suggestion that we seriously consider assembling on the Island next year to keep the party going.

Day 3 – And The Journey Continues...

Well, we're outta here; packing, checking to be sure nothing (*and no one*) is left behind, loading the car, extended farewells, quick post-mortems, promises to stay in touch, vows to do it again. 'Twas ever thus.

Without exaggeration, it was a great couple of days. Once again, although the arrangements and details were attended by a few Classmates on the Committee, the event was "made" by the Members of the Class of '62; those who attended, those who sent regrets for not being able to come, those who communicated with Classmates by phone, e-mail and the Class Website letting us know where you were, what you were doing and a little bit of personal history, past and present.

We wish you God's Speed as you continue this journey through life, as well as health, fulfillment and happiness.

Thanks to each and every member of the St. Mary's High School Class of '62 for who you are and who you have been.

To steal a quotation and sentiment from Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead: "...what a long, strange trip it's been." And the journey continues...

'70 Celebrates 60th birthday, '72 gathers for 40th reunion

By Skip Ahnemann '70

For me personally, being a St. Mary's/Kennedy Catholic alumnus means something. Being a part of this high school experience I feel is somewhat indelible. When I tell friends and colleagues that I still see a bunch of my high school friends they are incredulous. The friendships we formed way back then run deep. It may have been the fact that we were a regional school, so it took some effort to get together. Like hitchhiking from Yorktown to Katonah to catch a train to Brewster and then somehow find a way to get to Brewster Heights. Or how about when one of us was lucky enough to have a car and everyone put in their spare change for gas so the driver could cart us all around Westchester and Putnam counties. We made the effort and what resulted was a bond that does not fade away.

What is amazing to me is how easily the relationships we formed back then are rekindled and renewed. I can speak with someone from Kennedy that I have not seen in many years and after a few minutes it's like we never left. I saw that happening all over the Lakeview Room (*the fancy name for the cafeteria*) on Sept. 22. The hugging, the laughter, the genuine caring for one another – that is the magic of being St. Mary's/Kennedy Catholic alumni.

Thanks to all of you who came to the gathering. As Paul Smith once said, "People make a party," and you sure made this one special.



Joe Cloherty '70 catches up with Kathleen McQuade Tracy '72.



Still roaming the halls are '72 friends Ken Forrest, Joe Hickey, Ed McMahon, Frank Mannion and Wally Ruehle.



Two Class of '70 grads, Nancy Ryan Donohue and Gail O'Brien Bailey reminisce about being in Sr. Janet's art class.



Reunion reps Skip '70 and Lu '72 Ahnemann chat up Frank Mannion '72, P'06, '10.



The technology has changed, but the sentiments have not—St. Mary's and Kennedy grads share an indelible experience.



The Classes of 1970 and 1972 gathered on Sept. 22 to celebrate their 60th birthdays and 40th reunion, respectively.

PROFILES IN COMPASSION

Memories Flood Back as Alumni Swim Across America

Team Maureen remembers '06 classmate with prep for 4th plunge

The Long Island Sound ran deep this summer, deep into the recesses of memory as many friends and family recalled loved ones lost to cancer through their participation in Swim Across America.

For the fourth straight year, despite the inclement weather that ultimately kept them out of the Sound, Team Maureen was still awash with emotion. Founded by 2007 graduate Kerry Coughlin, the team lost its namesake, Maureen McAvoy '06, to a brain tumor in 2007. But through an annual basketball tournament (*Maureen's Hoops for Hope*, which will be held on Saturday, Dec. 22, 2012) and events like Swim Across America, the family and friends of Maureen continue to honor her memory and pass on her insuppressible spirit.

"As Maureen's family, friends and former teammates grow older and move further apart geographically, Team Maureen has been such a nice way to bring all of us together...and just be reminded of what an incredible person she was and how much she meant to each of us," said Coughlin, who was fundraising from Moldova, where she serves with the U.S. Peace Corps.

Coming together this year were 10 Kennedy Catholic alumnae—Gina '06 and Jackie '06 Bartolomeo, Kim Brown '08, Kerry Coughlin '07, Kristen Johannes '06, Emily Krizek '08, Kelly McAvoy '03, Kristen Nestler '06, Elizabeth O'Donnell '03 and Stacey Schwenk '08—who make up the majority of the 12-person team, along with Brian Dougherty and Ryan Sirignano of Long Island. Of the 10 graduates, four of the girls—Brown, Coughlin, Krizek and Nestler—swam with Maureen on the Kennedy Catholic team.

"I find this experience to be extremely rewarding," Krizek said. "It's a pretty incredible feeling to know what we are doing is helping to make such a great difference in so many peoples' lives."

Perhaps none more so than Kelly and Elizabeth, Maureen's sister and cousin, respectively, for whom swimming was a special shared connection. As she prepared for the swim, Kelly said she remembered all the good times they had together in the pool and ocean. For Elizabeth, it harkened back to her senior year at Kennedy when Maureen had just started as a freshman.

"Swimming was a natural part of our connected lives, and it continues to be," O'Donnell said, the tears flowing as the memories deepened. "Maureen and I were known as the water bugs in our family. We were the first to jump in—we never took the stairs—and the last to leave."

Even without the actual swim, Team Maureen topped its \$5,000 fundraising goal for cancer research. To see the full donor list or to make a donation, visit www.SwimAcrossAmerica.org, click "Donate", then "Sponsor a Swimmer/Team" and search "Maureen".

"I think she would be proud," Brown, this year's captain, said of what her former teammate might have made of the team in her name. "I know she would do the same if the situation were reversed. I truly believe Maureen is there, cheering each and every one of us on."

To a person, that is a sentiment carried by the members of Team Maureen. In fact, they all agree that Maureen is encouraging them to swim not just for her, but for all those who are sick and in need of support. As their team page notes, while some of the members have been around the water their entire lives, others will be venturing into uncharted waters, inspired by Maureen.

"I remember Kristen Nestler saying that Maureen would think we are all a little bit silly for taking on this tough swim every year," Coughlin said from Moldova. "Perhaps; but I also know Maureen would be the first in the water if she were here."

Some waters run too deep to ever dry up.



2012 captain Kim Brown '08 raised \$595 in leading this year's team in memory of Maureen.



The original members of Team Maureen 2009: Kerry Coughlin '07, Kristen Nestler '06, Samantha Fiorentino '07, Diana Warncke '07, Stacey Schwenk '08, Kim Brown '08, Emily Krizek '08 and Kristen Johannes '06.

File Photos by Alex Malecki

5 Gaels Earn National Merit Commendation

Photo by Alex Malecki



Father Vaillancourt congratulates Ryan L'Abbate, Laura Spreitzer, Kimberly McCarthy, Dennis Devey and Brendan Clair on their commendations.

Five Kennedy Catholic students – Brendan Clair '13, Dennis Devey '13, Ryan L'Abbate '13, Kimberly McCarthy '13 and Laura Spreitzer '13 – have been named Commended Students in the 2013 National Merit Scholarship Program.

About 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation have been recognized for their exceptional academic promise. Commended Students placed among the top five percent of the more than 1.5 million students who entered the 2013 competition by taking the 2011 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT).

"Recognizing academically talented students plays a fundamental role in the advancement of educational excellence within our nation," commented an NMSC spokesperson. "The young people recognized as Commended Students represent some of the best and brightest minds in the country as demonstrated by their outstanding performance in our highly competitive program. We sincerely hope this recognition will provide them with additional educational outlets and motivate them in their pursuit of academic achievement."

Congratulations Brendan, Dennis, Ryan, Kimberly and Laura!

LaMagna '16 Wins Napolitano Freshmen Scholarship

Photo by Jacob Bergmeier



Michael and Michele Napolitano P'08,'13, present John LaMagna '16 with the 2012 Marc Napolitano Freshmen Scholarship at the Sept. 7 Mass of the Holy Spirit.

On his first full day of classes, freshman John LaMagna of Ossining got quite a surprise. Following Communion, Father Vaillancourt called LaMagna up to the altar as the recipient of the 2012 Marc Napolitano Freshmen Scholarship.

With Mr. & Mrs. Napolitano looking on, as well as Marc's sister, Nicole '13, LaMagna accepted the award to a warm round of applause from his new schoolmates. The \$750 award, named in memory of the 2008 graduate who died tragically in an automobile accident in 2010, seeks to recognize an incoming freshman who embodies the characteristics of respect, trustworthiness, responsibility, caring and fairness, as Marc did.

The scholarship is made possible through donations by the friends and family of Marc Napolitano '08. A \$2,000 scholarship, sponsored by Crown Awards of Elmsford, is given in Marc's memory to a graduating senior each year at Commencement. To make a donation to the Marc Napolitano '08 Freshmen Scholarship, please visit www.KennedyCatholic.org/Gael-Giving.



KENNEDY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Founded as St. Mary's High School 1924-1966

Office of Advancement & Alumni Relations
54 Route 138
Somers, NY 10589

NON PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
WHITE PLAINS, NY
PERMIT NO. 8951

The Gael is produced by the Advancement Office of Kennedy Catholic. If you have questions, comments or news you would like to share with us, please call (914) 232-5061 ext. 134, or email us at alumni@kennedycatholic.org.

Publisher: Rev. Mark G. Vaillancourt

Editor in Chief: Alex Malecki

Managing Editor: Bob DeMicco

Associate Editors: Jacob Bergmeier,
Gina Marie Cantarella P'16, Nancy Knight '76

Contributing Writers: Skip Ahnemann '70,
Tom Duggan '62, Alex Malecki, Rev. Mark G. Vaillancourt

Photographers: Jacob Bergmeier Photography Inc.,
Bob DeMicco, Alex Malecki, Rev. Mark G. Vaillancourt

Design: Delfino Marketing Communications, Inc.

Printing: Graphic Management Partners, Inc.

... A NEW BEGINNING

After 45 years of hosting thousands of students in spirited competition and victory, the Kennedy gym was ready for an update. Now we need to outfit all those new seats with plaques...

The Gaels hope you'll consider a Gold, Silver or Bronze corporate-level sponsorship, or a Chairman's, President's or Coach's sponsorship as a class, family or individual gift. The work is almost done, but the payments have just begun. Please help us complete this project for future generations of Gaels.

Visit www.KennedyCatholic.org/Gym-Renovations to learn more.



www.facebook.com/KennedyCatholic

www.twitter.com/KennedyGaels

www.kennedycatholic.org/gael-giving