

THE GAEIL

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

Volume 19 – Spring 2015

Kings of the Court

Kennedy Catholic Reaches State Finals

See our cover story on Page 3



**KENNEDY
CATHOLIC
HIGH SCHOOL**

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

Chairman's Message

Spring 2015



The role of the Kennedy Catholic Board of Trustees is to provide overall management of the High School. Among our duties are the following:

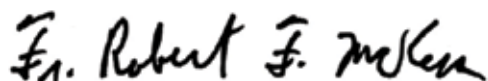
- Develop and approve an annual and 5-year operating budget and capital budget
- Develop, formulate and adopt program, extra-curricular, financial and other general policies that will guide the management of the High School
- Review the effectiveness of the High School management in promoting Catholic teaching and education as well as managing school operations
- Communicate regularly with the Principal and President of the High School regarding policies, plans and activities
- Develop a plan to maintain and improve the physical plant and grounds of the High School

The Board of Trustees meets every other month during the school year to review and evaluate past accomplishments and future plans. The sub-committees of the Board, which are the Finance Committee, the Advancement Committee, and the Building and Grounds Committee, meet regularly to help Fr. Mark Vaillancourt and the school administration in the areas of responsibility for each committee. It is the Principal, Fr. Vaillancourt, who is also the Chief Executive Officer of the School, along with his administration, who work with the teachers, staff, students and parents with regard to the day-to-day running of the school. It is the Board of Trustees who charges the CEO, along with his administration, to deal with such matters as discipline, curriculum, personnel, regulations and grievances of parents and staff.

Presently, Kennedy Catholic is very healthy enrollment wise, financially and in terms of school morale. With the hard work and intelligent, quality leadership of Fr. Vaillancourt and the school administration, staff and faculty, the future of the school is very bright. Expecting an increase in enrollment by some thirty students next year, the school is positioned to advance to the next level of distinguished Catholic intellectual, spiritual and physical development of the students in her care.

One of the keys to the success of Kennedy Catholic in recent years has been the welcome engagement of many alumni and parents. Alumni, along with the parents of our students, are crucial to a robust institutional advancement program. Through the generosity and financial support of many alumni and parents, we have been able to fund our scholarship program, modernize our buildings and grounds and update or expand our facilities. We hope and pray that even more alumni will support their alma mater as we forge ahead toward a future full of hope and pave a sturdy, durable path for future generations of students formed in the values and virtues of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Robert F. McKeon".

Rev. Robert F. McKeon, Chairman

Board of Trustees

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Kennedy Boys Varsity Basketball Makes State Finals

Team Played in NYSCHSAA State Championships

Playing for their first time in the state tournament in the New York State Catholic School Athletic Association (NYSCHSAA) Championship, the Kennedy boys faced off against Canisius High School from Buffalo, NY on Saturday March 14th at Fordham University. Although Kennedy's storybook season ended with a 65-55 loss to Canisius in the CHSAA Class A Championship, the Gaels are proud of what they accomplished this year.

The Gaels made their first appearance in the State Finals since entering the Catholic League 2 years ago. In the semi-finals leading up to the City A Championship game, Kennedy defeated Monsignor Farrell (Staten Island) to face Monsignor Scanlan in the finals. Kennedy won the CHSAA A City Championship defeating Monsignor Scanlan 72-61. Scanlan had previously defeated Fordham Prep (Bronx).

Coming into their final regular season scheduled game, Kennedy (23-0) played Fordham Prep. Although they had been victorious in their first encounter with Fordham Prep, Kennedy was handed a loss in the final seconds of the game.

The loss for the team may have been a blessing. Kennedy sophomore star, Malachi de Sousa, said: "We worked really hard in the offseason and our current on-going season. The loss against Fordham Prep was hard on us because we had never felt that feeling before. In the locker room after the game we came together as a team, and we just decided that we never want to have that feeling again. It (the loss) reignited the flame we had earlier in the season."

The team has an outstanding regular season record of 23-1 under the leadership of senior captains, Sean Delaney and Brandon Parker. Kennedy Catholic ranks as one of the top five teams in the NYSCHSAA League. To add to their regular season success, earlier this year the team won the Philadelphia Challenge, a tournament including schools from New York City and Washington DC. In addition, the team won the Stop DWI Challenge, a tournament held in Binghamton, NY during the season.

Following the leadership of our two senior captains, newly transferred junior, Elijah Hughes has been a vital component of the team's dominating offense. To complete the powerful starting line-up are two towering juniors, Kevin Buron and Dominick Cristiano. All of the successes of the Gaels' basketball team would not have been possible without their deep bench.

The season was filled with numerous highlights. During the same game that Kennedy suffered their only loss, Dominic Cristiano scored his 1000th career point, and was awarded the game ball in recognition of this. At the close of the regular season, three members of the team were named All League players: junior Dominic Cristiano, junior standout Elijah Hughes and senior Sean Delaney. Elijah Hughes was also named MVP of the CHSAA Class A City Region.

During the City A Championship game, the Gaels took the lead and never looked back. Hughes went scoreless for the first half of the game but seemed like a totally different person scoring all 15 of his points in the second half. Cristiano played solidly the whole game scoring 20 points, as did Delaney who scored 15 points with 15 rebounds and de Sousa who scored 16 points with 6 rebounds.

The team's victories have not only brought excitement to the players on the court but, also to onlooking parents, students, and fans in the stands. One student had described attending a Kennedy Catholic game as "an intense and exciting experience filled with continuous action." The team has many talented underclassmen which only increases the anticipation for next year.

(Contributing Writer Caitlin McCullough '16)



President's Page

Spring 2015



Dear Friend of Kennedy Catholic High School,

I have never felt better about our school, and I say that with both pride and optimism. Pride, because we have accomplished so much in such a short time, and optimism because there is still a lot more to do.

What have we done? Just look at our facilities, fields and classrooms and you have your answer. From our incorporation in 2009 to date, our school has renovated and expanded our facilities on every level: new ceilings and LED lighting for the open spaces, SMART boards and the latest in instructional technology for every classroom and iPads for every student. Our athletic facilities are second to none,

whether it is our newly renovated gym inside or the new turf fields outside – it has never been more exciting to be a Gael!

That aside, as we both know, it's the students, faculty and staff that come before everything else. And in those areas, we are truly blessed as well. Student enrollment is up steadily each year for the fourth year in a row. We now have 201 freshmen and it looks like we will repeat that number in September with the class of 2019. Our current population represents 40 school districts in the greater New York area – including the Bronx, Fairfield County, Putnam, Orange, Dutchess, to name a few areas.

Members of our current senior class have been accepted into a wide variety of the most highly-regarded schools of higher learning: Notre Dame, Yale, Fordham, Trinity College Dublin, University of Edinburgh, Northeastern, Villanova and Quinnipiac to name just a few.

As always, our faith is strong, as is your commitment to our school. Please remember us as we prepare for the future of our students, especially this year as we try to finish our track – I pray that we will figure into your generous plans!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark G. Vaillancourt', written in a cursive style.

Fr. Mark G. Vaillancourt
President and Principal

P.S. Please call me at the school if I can answer any question at all. 914-232-5061

Closing In on the Finish Line

Kennedy Pushes Towards Breaking Ground

What was once considered a three-phase project that would take several years, a new track at Kennedy Catholic is becoming more and more of a reality with each passing day, thanks to the support of the Kennedy Catholic community.

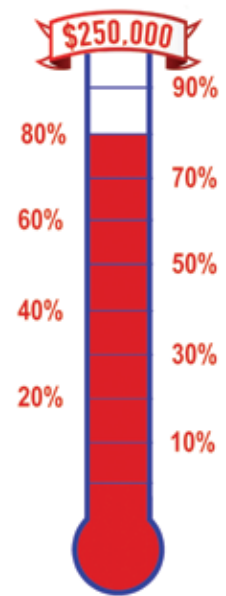
To date, we have raised over \$200,000 and are well on our way to meeting our goal of \$250,000 to break ground this summer. The total cost of the track is \$750,000. If you haven't already, or would like to contribute a bit more, we need help pushing through these last few yards and breaking the Finish Line Tape.

The first task is to strip the current track surface and then shorten the concrete foundation to make the track a proper 400-meter course. The current straightaway will be widened and new surfacing material will be installed for the triple jump, pole vault, shot put and other field events.

With a great history of success at Kennedy Catholic in track and field, we hope to continue it on a brand new beautiful competition surface. With your help and generosity, we can make a new track possible very soon.

If you would like to discuss a pledged gift to the track campaign, please contact Director of Advancement Fred Compton at (914) 232-5061 Ext. 110 or send an e-mail to advancement@kennedycatholic.org.

You can also visit kennedycatholic.org/support-us and make an online donation today.



Blessing and Dedication of Our Gifts

Kennedy Celebrates its Fortune with Blessing and Dedication



Kennedy held a beautiful blessing and dedication ceremony for two of its recent gifts, The Library of the Presidents and the Kennedy Catholic Technology Center.

The Library of the Presidents now features a grand total of 40 new computers for students to do their work, LED lighting, paintings, statues, new carpeting and furniture along with a large-screen display for students and faculty to conduct presentations. Thank you to the Blue and White Fund under the guidance of John and Bonnie Gould for their generosity.



The Kennedy Catholic Technology Center, in Memory of John R. Pennelle, is another sight to behold. Kennedy's breathtaking brand new technology center features a number of computers for students where they can engage in blended and virtual learning programs.



2015 Lux Christi Award

Kennedy Will Honor John McAvoy at this Year's President's Dinner



2015 Lux Christi Award
recipient Mr. John McAvoy

John F. Kennedy Catholic High School is privileged to announce that it will be honoring John McAvoy, as the Lux Christi Award recipient, at this year's annual President's Dinner.

John McAvoy's family has always strongly believed in the value of a Catholic education. Mr. McAvoy's mother, Mary McAvoy, shared her beliefs as a teacher at Blessed Sacrament in the Bronx. She and her husband, Bernard, ensured that their children had a Catholic education. Mr. McAvoy attended St. Raymond's Elementary School and then Fordham Preparatory High School, both in the Bronx. He furthered his Catholic education at Manhattan College, where he earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering. Like John, his wife, Kathleen, is a beneficiary of and a supporter of Catholic schools. Mrs. McAvoy went to St. Raymond's for elementary and high school and to Mount Saint Vincent for college. As a Mathematics and Education major, she then shared her Catholic education with students when she taught at Resurrection and Cardinal Spellman High Schools. John and Kathleen also blessed their daughters with a Catholic education. Their daughters all attended St. John's in Mahopac, NY

and then our beloved John F. Kennedy Catholic High School. Due to the positive impact of their religious education, each of their daughters chose a Catholic college. Maureen '06 and Jacqueline '12 became Fairfield Stags, Kelly '03 became a Holy Cross Crusader, and Siobhan '07 became a Providence College Friar.

Mr. McAvoy is Chairman, President, and Chief Executive Officer of Consolidated Edison, Inc. and CEO of its principal subsidiary, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc. Mr. McAvoy joined Con Edison in 1980, and has served in positions of increasing responsibility. In his last post, he served as President and CEO of Orange and Rockland Utilities, Inc., a Consolidated Edison, Inc. subsidiary that operates utility companies in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

Mr. McAvoy serves on the Board of Directors of Consolidated Edison, Inc., the American Gas Association, Edison Electric Institute, The Business Council of New York State, The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), The Partnership for New York City, and The Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City. He also serves on the Board of Trustees of The Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum.

Along with his Bachelor's Degree from Manhattan College, Mr. McAvoy holds an MBA from New York University. He is a graduate of the David Rockefeller Fellows Program.

In addition to serving on the aforementioned organizations Mr. McAvoy has been a wonderful supporter of John F. Kennedy Catholic High School. He, and his family, have strong ties to Kennedy Catholic. Although Mr. McAvoy holds many titles and honorariums he, along with his wife Kathleen, hold a significant title here at Kennedy, Parent of Kennedy Alumni.

Please join us as we, the John F. Kennedy Catholic High School community, formally honor Mr. John McAvoy at the 2015 President's Dinner on Wednesday May 27th at Trump National Golf Club Westchester.



2015 Divine Compassion Award

Kennedy Will Honor Pat Clair at this Year's President's Dinner

John F. Kennedy Catholic High School is privileged to announce that we will be honoring Patricia Clair, as the Divine Compassion Award recipient, at this year's annual President's Dinner.

Pat and her husband Terry live in Somers and are the proud parents of Brendan '13 and Tucker '15. Pat and Terry have been strong supporters of Catholic education. They have always felt that Catholic schooling reinforced the beliefs and values that they have tried to instill in their boys. The Clairs have considered the schools that they painstakingly selected for their children to be an extension of their home..."a home away from home" so to speak!

To that end, they are very grateful for the education that Brendan and Tucker have received both at St. Joseph's in Croton Falls and at Kennedy Catholic High School. Due to the outstanding faculty and administration at both schools, Pat says, "Both our boys have had great academic success at Kennedy after having a solid foundation laid at St. Joseph's. They have been well prepared for college and to enter the world at large. The morals, values and academic background they received from the teachers they have had will serve them well throughout their lives."

Pat is a wonderful supporter of Kennedy Catholic in many aspects, particularly as a parent volunteer. Pat says "I will sincerely miss being a part of the volunteer activities at Kennedy Catholic. My association with the people I have met through KCHS has been heartwarming."

Midshipmen Give Back to Their Alma Mater

Five Alumni Deliver Informative Presentation

Five Kennedy Catholic alumni, and current United States Naval Academy Midshipmen, prepared and presented an exciting and informative presentation to our current Junior and Sophomore Classes. The presentation focused on their prestigious academic institution, what their daily lives are like at the Naval Academy, some of the future opportunities, and how Kennedy Catholic provided them the foundation for their current successes. Kennedy could not be more proud of these fine ladies and gentlemen. We thank them for their commitment and service.



L to R Jason Davin '11, Dennis Devey '13, Breeda Mannion '10, Bridget Devey '14, John Davin '13

Annual Auction - Another Great Success

33rd Annual Kennedy Catholic Auction Delivers on Fun

The 33rd Annual Kennedy Catholic Auction was a resounding success for Kennedy Catholic. Led by Events Coordinator Virginia Vettoretti P'11,'14, the Auction Committee managed all aspects of the auction that helped make it another successful year. By the time auctioneer Peter Ruvolo, husband of alumna Annette Peters-Ruvolo '89, sounded the proverbial gavel, attendees had helped raise more than \$63,000 for Catholic education at Kennedy.

Special thanks go out to Prize Committee Chair - Donna Dooley, Decoration Committee Chair - Coleen Foley, and the entire Committee, whose dedication was on full display along with our assortment of items up for bid. Also, a big thank you to all the alumni, parent and local merchant donors who parted with those prizes for a worthy cause! Without you, there would not even be an auction.

Please mark your calendars now, and save Saturday, Nov. 14, 2015 for the 34th Annual Kennedy Catholic Auction.

Just as it's never too late to donate, it's never too early to get started by donating a good or service to the Auction. Re-gifts are welcome, as well as your membership on the 2015 committee. If you would like to donate an early prize or are interested in becoming more involved with Kennedy's oldest and most successful event, please write to Auction@KennedyCatholic.org.



Kennedy students provide some enjoyable entertainment for the guests. L-R Thomas Abbruzzese '16, Nicholas DiGrandi '16, and Jonathan Pasquarella '15



Mr. Michael '02 and Mrs. Whitney Kealy



Mr. Scott and Mrs. Maureen Baltazar P'16



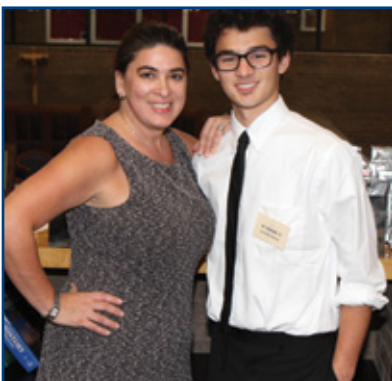
The energetic auctioneer Peter Ruvolo



Kennedy students providing some delicious finger food to the guests. L-R Megan Weidenhamer '15 and Johanna Weidenhamer '15



L-R Liz McElroy P'18, Debbie Spano P'15, and Alicia Balzano P'18



Gina Marie Cantarella P'16 and her son Al Cantarella '16



Mrs. Tricia Pagliuca-Johnson and Mr. Thomas Johnson P'18

Hitting the Books – An Update

Two Gaels Reach Finalist Status in National Merit Scholarship

As reported in our last edition of the Gael, two Kennedy Catholic students — seniors Tucker Clair and Susanna Cohen - were named semifinalists in the 2015 National Merit Scholarship Program. We are excited to report that both Tucker and Susanna have risen to the top as Finalists in the 2015 National Merit Scholarship Program.

Approximately 16,000 semifinalists were named in the 60th annual National Merit Scholarship Program. To be considered for a Merit Scholarship award, semifinalists must fulfill several requirements to advance to the finalist level of the competition. About 90 percent of the semifinalists are expected to attain finalist standing, and more than half of the finalists will win a National Merit Scholarship, earning the Merit Scholar title.

About 1.4 million juniors in more than 22,000 high schools entered the 2015 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the 2013 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, which served as an initial screen of program entrants. The nationwide pool of semifinalists, representing less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors, includes the highest scoring entrants in each state. The number of semifinalists in a state is proportional to the state's percentage of the national total of graduating seniors.

Five other Kennedy Catholic students were named Commended Students in the National Merit Program: seniors Mary Burns, Margaret Caridi, Jennifer Galvao, Alexandria Kleinschmidt and Ryan Marrone.

Congratulations Tucker, Susanna, Mary, Margaret, Jennifer, Alexandria and Ryan!



Kennedy Catholic seniors Tucker Clair and Susanna Cohen were named semifinalists in the 2015 National Merit Scholarship Program. The duo is joined by Father Mark Vaillancourt.

Gaels Work with a New STEM Partner

Students Start Work with the NAO Robot

Kennedy has added Teq's NAO Robot to its inventory of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) learning tools. STEM education is more important than ever in this high-tech, fast-paced world. STEM focuses on problem-solving and exploratory learning by encouraging students to work in teams to actively engage in challenges and discover solutions. We feel, what could be a more suitable tool for exploring the world of science than an advanced, interactive, speaking, and moving robot?

NAO is equipped with a simple, visual programming tool that allows our students to create and program different behaviors for the robot. Students can develop behaviors combining gesture, movement, sound, music, and speech. While using NOA, Kennedy students will be introduced to programming. Our students will learn to program using graphics / pictures that represent commands, thus forming a storyboard that NOA will follow as commands. Our students will slowly be introduced to the commands behind the picture to eventually learn to program in Java.

The NAO robotic system can also be used to introduce MATLAB®, a high-level language and interactive environment used by millions of engineers and scientists worldwide, that is used extensively in colleges today for engineering and the sciences. Learning MATLAB® while in high school gives our students a distinct advantage when entering college.



Embracing Technology

Kennedy Continues to Leverage Technology to Help Deliver Instruction

Choosing to go digital is an easy choice for any school, but knowing why you should and following through with a plan is what makes Father Vaillancourt's plan for Kennedy to move into the digital learning environment the right choice. Gone are the days of backpacks, busting at the seams, filled with heavy, out-of-date textbooks and numerous notebooks because Kennedy students use their devices both in the classroom and at home. Access to learning material goes well beyond the school day. Coupled with highly-qualified and experienced teachers, classroom instruction using the iPad with the Blackboard Learning Management system, for Education, and ExamSoft gives Kennedy students the whole package.

Two years ago the Advancement Department began phase one of Father Vaillancourt's plan when they obtained a sizable grant from Pace University and used the funding to put Apple iPads into the hands of teachers who began using them in and out of the classroom. Aside from email communication and research, teachers connected to the SmartBoards in the classroom for interactive lessons. Additionally, the IT department began a major upgrade to the server and a new WiFi system that could handle the additional wireless traffic.



Phase two of the project began in September of 2013 when freshmen and juniors entered a new-every-two-year lease of fully managed iPads for instruction, digital textbooks and, together with their sophomore and senior counterparts, began using the Blackboard Learning Management System. That year Father Vaillancourt asked Mr. Michael Kealy to lead the new iPad program and along with Mr. Stephen Schmidt, Vice Principal of Academic Affairs, they helped Kennedy's technology plan flourish. Mr. Kealy and Mr. Schmidt worked with industry experts to find the right programs to make using the technology safe, secure, and build a positive learning environment. Students' iPads are tied into a program that securely manages and restricts the built-in camera and microphone, restricts unauthorized applications and games from being downloaded, and has the ability to push down critical updates. After monitoring the overall data usage and connections to the WiFi in the building, the IT Department determined that it was time to take another step in upgrading the system to be ready for the next phase of the plan. A Verizon FiOS line was installed in addition to the current system, giving Kennedy two, load balanced lines of extremely fast Internet connection that has the ability to handle the large amount of data that needs to be transferred. Additionally, the WiFi access points in the building were doubled to handle the anticipated 700 wireless connected devices that the next school year would bring.

In September of 2014, we entered phase three of the project. The new class of freshmen and the juniors (last year's sophomores) began using the iPads as well as the two previous classes, placing the priceless technology in every Kennedy student's hands. This spring, teachers are taking the final step by beginning the process to switch from traditional paper tests to secure, online testing through an internet and app based program called, ExamSoft. ExamSoft has been used for years at the college level for medical and law exams because of its extremely secure environment. While taking a test, a student's WiFi, ability to take screenshots, and ability to use other applications are all disabled. Students are completely locked into the test and ExamSoft monitors their every touch, swipe and movement. Once they have completed their test and regained WiFi, the test is securely sent back to the cloud. Teachers love ExamSoft. The program can self-grade preassigned answers or collect answers for review by the teacher at a later time. Teachers can make and share banks of questions, and there is no waiting in line at the photocopy machine that, no matter how new, is sure to jam and cause frustration.

Kennedy students, teachers, and the administration are proud and excited to be the only school in the area using devices that are monitored, secure, and efficient.

Bionic Gaels Have Great Success

One Robot, Three Inspire Awards, Eleven Kennedy Students, and Over 700 Community Outreach Hours Later...



... the Bionic Gaels will be heading out for the 2nd Annual East Super Regional in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

The FIRST Tech Challenge program has thrived in Kennedy Catholic since its start in November 2011. FIRST, For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology, has been inspiring kids for the past 25 years about STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) with annual robotics challenges for all age groups. The FIRST Tech Challenge, geared for students grades 7-12, challenges participants to build a robot to manipulate wiffle balls in a game called

“Cascade Effect!” The Bionic Gaels, the older of the two KCHS teams (the Xeno Gaels being the other), is out to prove that they are about much more than robots!

For the past season, we have collectively put in over 1,500 hours on the robot and another 700 for community projects. Our robot, PT-109, has served us well for the four competitions we have played in; yet we are still striving to improve for the competition ahead. So far, we have played in three regional qualifiers and one championship. We have had the tremendous honor of winning the Inspire Award, which congratulates a team for embodying the “true nature of the challenge” multiple times, and have been able to advance to the Empire NY, New York City/Long Island, and New Jersey State Regional Championships. Since we won the award at the Empire event, we have withdrawn from the other championships to give other teams another tournament experience. We are using this time to prepare for the Super Regional.

Besides our robot, our team has put on several projects to connect with our community. We demonstrated at the New York State Fair, and the Festival of Trees to support cancer survivors at Ann’s Place in Danbury, CT. This past summer, three members ran a multi-week summer robotics camp, and we also put on a robotics workshop at the Patterson Library. Within the FIRST program, we helped fellow teams by hosting the Bionic Brouhaha II: The Second One Qualifying Tournament and by mentoring rookie teams Xeno Gaels of KCHS and The League of Extraordinary Roboticists from Danbury.

All of our hard work has paid off, and we are so excited to once again represent our region and Kennedy Catholic High School at the Super Regional! (*Laurel Higham '15*)

Xeno Gaels – Don’t Call Them Upstarts

Although New, this Team has Great Talent and Potential

The Xeno Gaels are a newly formed robotics team here at Kennedy Catholic High School. There are five members on the Xeno Gaels: Al Cantarella '16, Rachel Beisswenger '18, Sean Dollard '18, Eric Dollard, and Chris Hanrahan '17. They work together to create a competition-ready robot which will perform various tasks. They were established in late November 2014 and have competed in five competitions so far, four of them being qualifying tournaments. The Xeno Gaels were in the finals of all four competitions, taking second place in three of them and first in one. The Xeno Gaels competed in their first regional tournament at Pace University, but did not advance in this particular round. (*Al Cantarella '16*)



Kennedy Live Studio Upgrades

Kennedy Live sees Big Upgrades in the Studio

As of the 2014-2015 school year, the Kennedy Live studio has been completely remodeled with modern, state-of-the-art material. The Kennedy Live crew now has the ability to stream the show over the Internet, which makes the show easily viewable to students on the Smartboards in every classroom throughout Kennedy and parents at home. The three cameras used to film the show now shoot in 1080 hp, and the studio has gained a green screen used most commonly for the show's "This Day in History" segment. New computers serve as a teleprompter and possess editing software, as well as a digital switch board with which students direct the show. There are also fully functioning microphones accompanied by a sound board for control. Announcements, news, and sports are broadcasted daily to the Kennedy community through this beautifully refurbished studio.

(Emma Berry '16)



Kennedy's Rigorous Program Paying Off

As Senior Gaels Start Exploring College they find a Big Payoff

As our seniors begin their transition from their high school years to their colleges of choice, we as a community celebrate their accomplishments. The members of the class of 2015 have contributed much to the life of Kennedy Catholic through their efforts and achievements academically, spiritually, athletically, artistically, and altruistically.

At this point in the school year, the students are beginning to receive word from the college admissions offices for early action/decision, rolling, and instant admissions deadlines with the vast majority of regular decisions arriving by March 31. Students need to finalize their school of choice and make a commitment by May 1 to reserve their spot on the roster for the Class of 2019.

It is a tribute to our students to see many acceptances from fine private and public schools across the United States and abroad including: University of Notre Dame, Yale, Fordham, SUNY: Albany, Buffalo, Binghamton, Stonybrook, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Trinity College Dublin, University of Edinburgh, Virginia Polytechnic, Northeastern, Villanova, Swarthmore, Quinnipiac, University of Tulsa, College of Charleston to name only a few. To date, our students have been awarded approximately \$8 million in merit scholarships recognizing their scholastic distinction as applicants.

Beginning in 2012, we have been able to offer our students opportunities for college admissions interviews at KCHS with colleges also willing to weigh in on scholarship offers as well as admissions decisions on the spot. These Instant Decision Days have afforded options to our students at schools such as St. John's University, Mount Saint Mary College, Monmouth University, Iona College, and Manhattanville with offers of \$2 million for academic excellence. Our College Fairs in the Spring and Fall also present our student body with direct access to admissions representatives who provide information about courses of study, features of campus life, and insight into the application process.

From day one as freshmen, our students begin building their transcripts and portfolios of activities and accomplishments and it is gratifying to see the culmination of their Kennedy Catholic years rewarded by college options as opportunities for their future successes.

Spring Musical Alive with Talent

This Year's Spring Musical Showcases the Great Talent of Gaels

This past March the Kennedy Catholic Players presented *The Sound of Music*. The show is based on the true story of the Von Trapp family, who escaped Austria during the German invasion in the 1940s. *The Sound of Music* is renowned for its beautiful music and compelling storyline, which puts an emphasis on faith and family. The school musical is an opportunity for Kennedy's students to showcase their varied talents, whether performing on the stage or working behind the scenes in stage crew.

As a senior, I have participated in the school musical for four years now, and have formed some of my best memories and closest friends in the process. Although the weeks leading up to the play are hectic, stressful, and exhausting, the cast will feel like a family by the time the curtains close for the last time. The moments spent before each show singing in the dressing room, holding hands in the chapel, and pumping ourselves up backstage are always emotional and meaningful.

The amount of time, commitment, and energy that the cast and crew dedicate to its production every year is truly admirable. The best reward for all of that work is a crowded auditorium. There is nothing more gratifying or exhilarating than performing for a full house. So even if your interests don't lie in the arts, you should come to support the Kennedy Catholic Players whenever you have the chance! (*Jen Galvao '15*)



Art Flourishes in the Commons

Annual Art Show – Prelude to the Beauty of Spring

The annual Kennedy Catholic Art Show took place March 5-8th in the commons. The art students worked extremely hard all year to display their best work at the exhibit. My personal favorite part of the art show is the senior displays. Each senior artist gets their own display board where they get to write their name artistically and showcase their favorite pieces of art. The rest of upper class art students have the opportunity to display their work on easels throughout the Commons. The classes featured in the show were Studio Art, Drawing and Painting 1 and 2, and the senior advanced classes. This exhibit was conveniently displayed during the Spring Musical – *The Sound of Music*, so it was accessible during the intermissions of the performance. (*Lauren Costello '15*)



Alum Realizes Dream of Writing

Gael Alumna Discovers the Love of Writing and Publishes First Book



Jacqueline M. Kastberg '09

Jacqueline Kastberg '09 graduated from The College of Charleston School of Business with a B.S. Degree in Business Administration, concentration in Finance and two minors in Classics and English. "I studied Classics and English purely as an interest, I came to write the book initially as a hobby." Jacqueline's parents told her that since she read so much (fiction) why not try her hand at writing. So over the summers Jacqueline would write the first book of her series. *The Elemental Guardians Book I: Foundling*.

Over time, the story began to unfold and Jacqueline found she really enjoyed writing. "I didn't expect anything to come from it other than a hobby that I loved..." however, last March her father told her about a publishing company he had heard over the radio and urged her to submit her manuscript. With nothing to lose Jacqueline sent it off. A week later, Page Publishing Inc. received her manuscript. "They called me to inform me that the Board of Review had approved my manuscript and it was to be moved into publishing. It was a very surreal conversation since I was sure they would

inform me that the manuscript had been denied." The experience has taught Jacqueline the lesson that you never know what will happen if you don't go for it. So now the motto she lives by is: Go for it!

The Elemental Guardians Book I: Foundling is based on a world where the four elements; fire, water, earth, and air are guarded and maintained by four clans. These clans are animals that fully represent their element, and as such, have the intelligence, and can take the shape, of man. To the rest of the world, however, they are just a legend told to children as bedtime stories. In the first book, Aileron is the last of the water clan, but is unaware of such. Making an unlikely friendship he journeys to discover who he is and why he is the last.

Currently Jacqueline is finishing the second book in *The Elemental Guardian* series and composing the outline for the third.

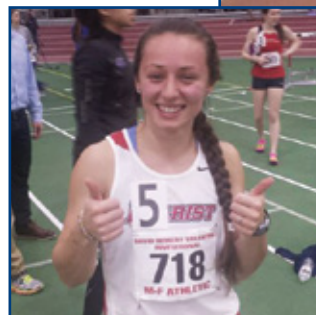
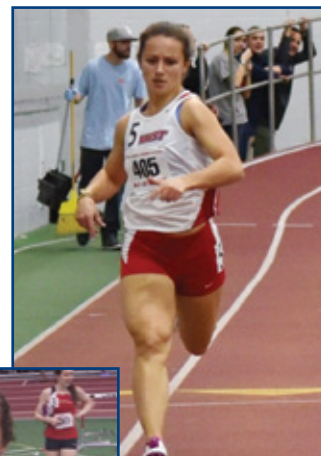
Alumna Holds College Track Record

Danielle Asaro '11 Breaks 5th Marist Track Record

Danielle Asaro '11 competed at The Boston University Valentine Invitational Meet on Friday, Feb. 13, 2015. The BU Valentine Invitational is the biggest event of the indoor track season with approximately 50 schools attending from as far north as Ottawa, Canada, to as far south as Florida State. Although she was feeling under the weather, Danielle was determined to run in her third-to-last meet of the season.

After a disappointing 60 meter result she collected herself and set out with determination in the 200 meter. With advice and encouragement from her father and the words of Kennedy's own Coach Elliot, she was off.

Getting off to a fast start, Danielle accelerated to the finish line to win her heat and cross the line in 25.68 seconds. Danielle shattered the old 200-meter school record of 26.02 from 2007, making that her fifth broken record of her college career. Danielle surpassed her own personal record by .57 seconds. (Lauren Costello '15)





Lights, Camera, Action - Kennedy Production Goes Public

Four Gaels Submit their Video Work to Local Film Festival

Four Kennedy Catholic students, Emma Berry '16, Max Jarcho '16, Jonathan Pasquarella '15 and Tevan Costoso '15, each submitted an entry in the Greenwich Youth Film Festival, one of the most important festivals in the northeast for aspiring HS filmmakers.

The Greenwich Youth Film Festival encourages high school students to express themselves through the art of film. This exciting film and video competition is co-sponsored by the Junior League of Greenwich and Greenwich Library. It is open to all high school students in Westchester and Fairfield Counties.

Emma produced a powerful and personal piece. Emma's film is a Documentary about her journey of self acceptance in a world where women are constantly judged by their appearance. It is heartfelt and inspiring.

Like Emma, Max also produced a powerful and personal piece. Max produced a Creative film about the masks we wear while out in public, never letting people know who we really are. He peels away the layers and explains the importance of removing that mask. His suggestion that we start with people that love us is profound and wonderful advice for both students and adults.

Jon produced a Music Video, which he wrote and performed. It is a beautiful film that explores love and loss from the perspective of a teenager. The haunting black and white imagery is tearful, moving and the ending is truly unbelievable! Jon clearly illustrates the axis of power swing in the game of love.

Tevan produced a moving Public Service Announcement (PSA) on the dangers of driving while tired. It is a message all teenagers must see as they begin their driving experiences. He breaks down a potential danger that is all too real: That driving while tired is just as deadly as DWI. This PSA can also be used for programming here at KCHS.

While we hope for nominations (and to win!) the journey in creating these videos has been a fulfilling experience for all involved. We are also excited to get the word out about KCHS and our newly refurbished MediaLab as a force to be recognized in the region. The Festival is scheduled for April 26th at the Cole Auditorium at the Greenwich Library in Greenwich CT.

Please visit <https://vimeo.com/channels/kchsmedialab> to view the submissions.

(Martin Glembotzky – Television Production Course Instructor)



Significant Milestone on the Horizon 2016 Marks Kennedy Catholic's 50th Anniversary

A couple of levels beneath the usual liveliness of Kennedy Catholic, past several windy hallways, and behind a substantial grey door lies every possible school record or artifact imaginable: building plans, football helmets, old photographs, and near ancient faculty payrolls (of laughable contents according to Sister Celesta Kelley). The fact that 2016 will mark the 50th anniversary of Kennedy seems hard to believe, but with over 50 years of history literally surrounding me, it was increasingly easy to believe and amazing to behold.



In the years preceding 1967, John F. Kennedy Catholic High School was called St. Mary's, whose campus was located nearby in Katonah and was founded by the Sisters of Divine Compassion. In 1965, Monsignor James Boyle from Mount Kisco issued the groundbreaking for the new location, and Archbishop Maguire laid the cornerstone late in 1966. The dedication of the newly constructed school and convent in May of 1968 is perhaps one of the most celebrated events in Kennedy's history. Many notable figures were in attendance, principally Former First Lady Jackie Kennedy. Her presence was extremely significant, especially considering the recent passing of President Kennedy, for whom the school is named.

When Sister Barbara Heil was asked what aspect had stayed the same throughout her fifty years at Kennedy, she replied, "The kids." This seemed odd at first, but after paging through yearbooks from half a century of graduating classes, give or take obvious stylistic hair choices, the faces and smiles of Kennedy students from the past felt familiar. Even the 1967 Boy's Varsity Gaels Basketball team had almost as a successful record as this year's current team, and fifty years later, Sister Janet Meehan is still coaching the immensely victorious cross country team. Conversely, Sister Barbara relayed that our esteemed principal Father Vaillancourt was responsible for the crucial fundraising and recent valuable changes that have made Kennedy Catholic into the institution it is today. As stated in the Dedication Address of 1968, "[Kennedy] will be a center of courage, competency, and compassion – a citadel of enduring values and long range goals." This statement has reigned true and at the center of Kennedy for fifty years, and assuredly for fifty more. (*Layne Smith '16*)



The Love for Fellow Gael Driving Force for a Great Cause

Each Year Gaels Rally to Support *Maureen's Hoops for Hope*



Maureen McAvoy was a remarkable young woman. As a member of the Class of 2006, she was a three sport athlete (soccer, basketball and swimming) as well as a talented artist and a gifted National Honor Society student. She began treatment in December 2006, at Memorial Sloan Kettering, in the Pediatric Ward, when she was diagnosed with brain cancer. It moved and saddened her to see so many young people fighting cancer, with such bravery, that she wanted to find a way to help them. It was this desire to help that became the seed for *Maureen's Hoops for Hope*. The first Hoops for Hope was held in December 2007, shortly after Maureen's passing, and was coordinated by her classmates and family. The event continues to run annually and all money raised goes directly to the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) for childhood brain cancer research. Over the last eight years, participants have raised over \$40,000. Since 2011, the program has been presented with a certificate from the MSKCC for continued dedication and commitment to cancer research.

Maureen's Hoops for Hope is always an enjoyable event where children, students and alumni create teams and play in a 5v5 basketball tournament. A 50/50 raffle is drawn and t-shirts are sold. In memory of Maureen, alumni get to reconnect and everyone can have a great night knowing that they are helping others at the same time. This year, the Eighth Annual *Maureen's Hoops for Hope* raised the greatest amount yet at \$12,000, between the tournament's contribution and outside donations. It is truly a wonderful opportunity for the Kennedy Catholic community to come together in remembrance of a beloved Gael. (Rebecca O'Callaghan '16)

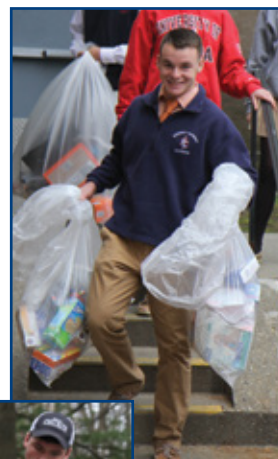
Kennedy Students Give

During this Lenten Season Kennedy Students lead Giving Drives

Giving back to the community has always been at the forefront of Kennedy Catholic's mission. This year's Lenten season, Kennedy hosted two drives to help the local community as well as the global community. The first was the annual food drive which benefited the Northern Westchester Community Center and the Yorktown Heights food pantry. Students, faculty and alumni were encouraged to bring in nonperishable food items to help support this initiative. Every year this drive successfully helps those in need. Last year Kennedy raised over 1,200 pounds of food, and this year the goal was to exceed that number.

The second drive was for school supplies to send to children in Angola in conjunction with the Our Lady of Fatima parish in Yonkers. Items needed ranged from paper and pencils to calculators and tablets. The student government facilitated the collection of the items from every homeroom on each Friday during Lent. Both of these drives ended on Friday March 27th. In the spirit of Lent and the gratuitous tradition of Kennedy Catholic, these drives put our faith into action and helped those people in need.

(Rebecca O'Callaghan '16)



President's Circle Christmas Reception

Celebrating the Season with Some of Kennedy's Treasured Supporters



As Kennedy Catholic was entering the holiday season she hosted a reception to help celebrate the season with some of her treasured supporters, members of the Kennedy Catholic President's Circle. The event was hosted by President and Principal Fr. Mark Vaillancourt at his residence, warmly known as The White House. The guests enjoyed hors d'oeuvres, coffee, and dessert. Along with the delicious food, the home was filled with love, song, and fellowship. Many of our students added to the evening by sharing their talents with the guests and performed many musical pieces. The guests were swept up by the spirit of the evening and took to song too.



The talented Gaels sing Christmas songs for the guests at the President's Circle Christmas Reception.



The talented Gaels, who performed at the President's Circle Christmas Reception, pose for a beautiful picture by the tree.



Soloist Monica Gayanello '16, with guitar accompaniment Emma Berry '16, perform for the guests at the President's Circle Christmas Reception.



Guests at the President's Circle Christmas Reception getting into the Christmas spirit by singing.

Gaels' Gifts Shared at Christmas Concert

Celebrating the Season - Kennedy Hosts Annual Christmas Concert

As the holiday season was upon us, Kennedy Catholic hosted its annual Christmas Concert. The spirit of the season filled the air, as many students shared their talents with the Kennedy Catholic Community. Several dance and music pieces were beautifully performed. If you haven't had the opportunity to share this experience with us please consider doing so next year. Bring your friends and family to help spread the spirit of love and joy.



A fun and lively dance number performed by our students helped bring cheer and joy to the evening.



It wouldn't be a Christmas Concert without the beautiful music our students performed.



Angelic voices add to the spirit of holiness.



Arts Department Chair, Mrs. Ines Wilhelm-Boston, leads chorus in their beautiful singing.



Alumnus with Big Plans

Leading the Charge for a Fall Reunion

Thomas McCabe '95 has made it his mission to reach out to his old classmates from the Kennedy graduating class of 1995 and organize a 20 year reunion.

He started a Facebook Page to help drum up support and interest in the reunion. The Facebook Page now has over 125 of the 179 people in Thomas' class. The reunion, as of now, is set for sometime in September of 2015 at Kennedy. He, along with a small committee of his former classmates, has taken on the challenge of setting up the event. Thomas has asked anybody that is familiar with his graduating class or any members of his graduating class to contact him, join his Facebook page, and become a part of his mailing list for the event. If all works out, the 20th reunion should be a wonderful time for old friends to catch up. After all, once a Gael, always a Gael.

Link to 20th reunion Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1537432679842121>

Contact Thomas: attymccabe@gmail.com

After graduating Kennedy, Thomas attended Sacred Heart University and earned his bachelor's degree, then earned his law degree at Quinnipiac University. After becoming a professional attorney, Thomas worked for the United States Congress and spoke on matters pertaining to healthcare and veterans affairs. Currently, Thomas has his own litigation firm.

For more information on a reunion for your class, contact: advancement@kennedycatholic.org. (Ryan Wilson '15)

Upcoming Events You Won't Want to Miss

Please Mark your Calendars for these Exciting Upcoming Events

Kennedy Catholic's Annual President's Dinner – Wednesday May 27, 2015 – Trump National Golf Club Westchester

Please join us in honoring the Lux Christi Award Recipient John McAvoy, Chairman, President and CEO of Consolidated Edison, Inc., the Divine Compassion Award Recipient Pat Clair, the Teacher of the Year, and the 2015 Students of Excellence at the Kennedy Catholic President's Dinner.

Kennedy Catholic's 12th Annual Golf Classic – Thursday October 1, 2015 – Centennial Golf Club

Last year, Kennedy Catholic's Golf Classic was a rousing success. The day featured beautiful weather and a total of 158 golfers participating. Let's plan for even greater success this year! Please join us for a terrific time out with friends and family and help support the great things Kennedy Catholic does for our students.

Kennedy Catholic's Annual Auction – Saturday November 14, 2015

The 33rd Annual Kennedy Catholic Auction was an outstanding success for Kennedy Catholic. Led by Chairperson Virginia Vettoretti P'11, '14, the Auction Committee managed a successful auction that raised more than \$63,000 for Catholic education at Kennedy. Save the date and let's plan for even greater success next year!



KENNEDY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

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

Office of Advancement
54 Route 138
Somers, NY 10589

The Gael is produced by the Office of Advancement at John F. Kennedy Catholic High School. If you have any questions, comments or news you would like to share with us, please call (914) 232-5061 ext. 110 or write to Advancement@KennedyCatholic.org.

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Design: Delfino Marketing Communications, Inc.

delfino.com

Printing: Graphic Management Partners, Inc.

gmpart.com

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