

KENNEDY CATHOLIC PREPARATORY SCHOOL ♦ SAINT MARY'S

# THE GAEIL

FALL 2021 • VOLUME 33

## *Kennedy Catholic Announces Campaign For New Student Fitness Center*

Also Inside:

**Lacrosse Teams Win  
Championships**

**Lindsie O'Hagan Takes  
To The Skies and  
Saves Lives!**

**Alumni Updates**





# President's Message



Dear Friends of Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School,

To the families and friends of Kennedy Catholic Prep, I send you my heartfelt thanks for all of your assistance and support during this era of the COVID-19 pandemic. Your recognition of the hard work and dedication to excellence by our Kennedy team during these very trying times is greatly appreciated. If you were to ask any of our staff if it has all been worth it, they would acclaim with one voice – absolutely! And for the students, the results speak for themselves. Just look at the Kennedy Catholic classes of 2020 and 2021! The resilience in the face of adversity by our students has won them the high accolade of national recognition in the colleges and universities that they now attend – just visit our website and learn more!

But now let's move from the adversity of the past and turn towards the brilliant hope of our future. And let me take this opportunity as the head of our school to acknowledge someone who is stepping up for his alma mater and giving her much needed support to take our school forward – Mark Girolamo, Class of 1971. Mark, as you might remember, was the winner of our Sr. Christopher award for his COVID-19



reopening plan. Amidst quarantines, isolations and lock-downs, Mark found a way to open our school safely -- and for that we are forever grateful. Now Mark has stepped up again in a big way. But this time it is to help us build a student fitness center that will benefit all our students whether they be a high-energy varsity athlete or a Kennedy student seeking wholesome exercise. The Sr. Janet Meehan Student Fitness Center will be a welcome addition to our already expansive athletic complex. Filled with state-of-the-art exercise equipment, the student fitness center will be a very welcome sight flanking our newly renovated track and field facility. Mark has made a generous offer to extend a matching gift to anyone who wishes to support the project, up to \$300,000 – now that's love for your alma mater! For more details, please read page 9.

As you turn the pages of this edition of *The Gael*: if you are a parent - be excited for your child; if an alum - be proud of your alma mater; and if you are a prospective student - be enthusiastic about becoming a Gael!

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark G. Vaillancourt'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

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



## *Events at Kennedy Catholic*

Spring Musical "Something Rotten" -  
March 4-6, 2022

2022 President's Dinner - May 26, 2022

Class of 2022 Graduation - June 4, 2022

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## **UPDATE YOUR ALUMNI RECORDS**

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The Gael is produced by the Office of Advancement at Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School

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Chief Executive Officer



# What's New At Kennedy Catholic

Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School continues to improve and add to its facilities, athletics program, arts programs and technology in order to provide students with a well-rounded, modern college-preparatory education that few can rival. Some of the newest additions and plans include:

- To forward its commitment to advancing STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) initiatives, Kennedy Catholic has upgraded computers in the Library and Computer Lab with new Hewlett Packard machines running Windows 10. All together there are now 40 state-of-the-art computers for students to use and build their computer, software and research skills.

- The construction of the Media Building on the football field is well under way. The building features restrooms, concession space and room for cameras, announcers and athletic coaching staff to view the field from over the bleachers. Construction of the Media Building is projected to conclude in the spring of 2022.

- Plans to build a Student Fitness Center, a building to supplement our athletic facilities, are developing. The approximately 2,300 square foot building will be constructed next to the track on the side closest to the school. Students will have a



top-notch facility with weight stations, treadmills, elliptical machines and other



equipment to work out with and pursue a healthy lifestyle, and athletic teams will be able to conduct the weight training necessary to successfully compete in today's world of high school sports. A gracious donor will match the first \$300,000 in contributions to this project dollar-for-dollar; your support is needed (see page 9 for more information).



- Plans to expand our institution to include Middle School facilities are developing. Kennedy Catholic will be complemented by St. Mary's Academy, which will house grades 6 through 8. This addition will strengthen both our local school community and the broader mission of supporting Catholic education. A tentative start date of fall 2022 has been set.

- All of the classrooms have been outfitted with prints depicting classical art, religious images and acclaimed literary works to encourage an appreciation of fine art and the classics.



# Special Times With Special People

## The Classes of 70 & 71 Celebrate Their 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion



**T**he Kennedy Catholic Classes of 1970 and 1971 celebrated their 50 year reunions in the school's Lake View Room on Saturday, October 2, 2021. The Gaels were happy to be able to spend time together, especially after the events of last year postponed reunions.

Spearheading the reunions were Skip Ahnmen '70, Joe Cloherty '71, P'02, '04, '06, '06; Michael Enright '71 and Mark Girolamo '71. Ed Bender '70 provided sound and DJ services for his fellow classmates. Several generous alumni contributed centerpieces, balloons, decorations and even cannolis from their favorite bakery. Alumni also brought materials from their high school days - including a 1967 Student Handbook, yearbooks and photographs to aid in the joyous reminiscing.



All together 100 alumni returned to their old stomping grounds to reconnect with classmates they hadn't seen in several decades and wander the hallowed halls of their high school. Some even arrived early for a special demonstration of classroom technology and a tour of the grounds led by Mark Girolamo.

Those who were lost were not forgotten. There was a special reading honoring classmates who have been called to Heaven, with a blessing from President/Principal Father Mark Vaillancourt.

A delicious dinner was then served in the Lake View Room, and after dessert both classes gathered in the Commons for the traditional group photo. Thank you to the event organizers, donors and everyone who made this evening wonderful! *Once a Gael, always a Gael!*

Contact our Director of Alumni Affairs to organize YOUR reunion at [alumni@kennedycatholic.org](mailto:alumni@kennedycatholic.org)





# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

## *Lindsie O'Hagan '11*

### **A Nursing Angel Using Wings to Care for the Tiniest Patients**



Every student dreams of reaching new heights once they have earned their Kennedy Catholic diploma, and a few literally touch the skies not too long after graduation. Take Lindsie O'Hagan '11, who took her nursing skills airborne.

After graduating Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School in 2011, Lindsie successfully graduated from East Carolina University's nursing school four years later (where she was also class president at ECU's College of Nursing). She then began her career as a neonatal ICU nurse at Vidant Medical Center in North Carolina, eventually taking it a few steps higher by becoming a neonatal-pediatric critical care Flight Nurse in conjunction with her ICU job.

Lindsie was drawn to ICU nursing while doing her clinicals in nursing school. "I love the idea of fast-paced, intense situations. So when I was approached by some members of the flight team, I gave it a lot of thought and overcame my doubts and decided to literally hop aboard," said Lindsie. And now she is grateful for "one of the coolest jobs ever."

"We care for the sickest children in eastern North Carolina and there are only about 15 of us who are trained to care for these smallest of patients — the neonatal infants born prematurely, some weighing only 300 grams," she added, acknowledging that she finds this type of nursing rewarding. Lindsie recognizes that her devotion and care also have an impact on the families whose children they are transporting.

"These babies, as well as their families, are so vulnerable and we come in and take them to a higher



level of care in an ICU, giving them a fighting chance for life,” said Lindsie. “There is a lot to learn to be a flight nurse, and it makes you think differently than an ICU nurse, so I appreciate the way it’s expanded my practice as well as my knowledge.”

As a neonatal-pediatric critical care flight nurse, Lindsie transports via helicopter and ambulance patients from small outlying hospitals to a large level one trauma center such as Duke University Hospital or UNC Medical Center. The flight and medical crew serve 29 counties in North Carolina and take care of patients ranging from birth to age six in the most serious need of highly specialized help.

As if the importance of her job and taking to the skies to help babies and children needing critical care aren’t enough, Lindsie retains the Kennedy Catholic ethics of working hard and helping others by currently pursuing her nurse practitioner degree at East Carolina University AND publishing an article in *Nursing Management*.



A group project for a healthcare finance and economics class, the article seeks to explain the different healthcare proposals currently being discussed in the United States. Read the article “Making Sense of the Medicare Proposals” in *Nursing Management*, September 2020 issue - Vol 51-Issue 9.

Lindsie credits Kennedy Catholic for allowing her to reach her full potential. “Every teacher and staff member at Kennedy was great. I really think that I grew personally at Kennedy as a student and as a young woman,” she said, adding that you don’t have to be a straight-A student in high school to achieve your later goals and dreams. “Always be kind to others, work hard, find what makes you

happy and never stop learning or believing in yourself,” Lindsie advises current students.

To balance out her hectic time in the skies and ICUs, Lindsie and her fiancé Caleb Stroud find peace on the small farm they live on with 25 cows, a donkey, one duck and several dogs and cats. The couple is getting married in December 2021.



# ALUMNI UPDATES & NEWS

*Kennedy Catholic loves to hear from our alumni, and share your updates and good news with the Kennedy Catholic Family. Visit [kennedycatholic.org/alumni](http://kennedycatholic.org/alumni) to create a submission. Contact the Alumni Office at [Alumni@KennedyCatholic.org](mailto:Alumni@KennedyCatholic.org) with your information and photos so we can share, and so we can stay in touch with you too! Don't forget to follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn! Reach us also at (914) 232-5061 ext. 110.*

## Class of 1971

Dr. Kathy (Deierlein) Livingston retired from Quinnipiac University's Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice in 2018 where she taught courses in medical sociology. Kathy's hobbies include genealogical research, and she visited Ireland in 2014 with her siblings to trace her granddad's path from Tullamore to Cobh before he migrated to the United States. In 1987, Kathy visited England, Wales and Ireland with fellow KC alumna Sue (Machacek) Davis '71, and in 2019 they visited Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to travel the Wild Atlantic Way. Kathy attained Irish citizenship and lives with her husband Robert in Woodbridge, CT.



## Class of 1985

Amy (Harradine) Pittman retired from the FBI as a Supervisory Special Agent after 20 years. She received her Master of Science in Criminology degree from Florida State University where she now mentors criminal justice students. Amy also works part-time with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and attended their Super Bowl victory game in Tampa, FL. In March 2021 she became a contractor with the U.S. Department of Justice in the Maldives as the Senior Law Enforcement Advisor to the Maldives Police Service for Counterterrorism Financing and Anti-Money Laundering matters (CTF/AML). Amy resides in Tampa, FL and is President of Amy Pittman Consulting LLC.



## Class of 1995

Roland Baroni was recently appointed Chief Risk Officer (CRO) for Deloitte Consulting LLP, with responsibility for setting and executing Risk Management strategy across the U.S. Consulting practice and its affiliates. In this role, Roland is a member of the U.S. Consulting Management Committee and the U.S. Operating Risk Committee.

Roland leads a network of senior Quality and Risk Management professionals focused on operational risk mitigation associated with contracting, service delivery, and the development of new offerings and innovations. He also has primary responsibility for enterprise risk management, including brand protection, reputational risk, conduct risk, external communications, confidentiality & privacy and ethics & compliance.

Roland joined the firm in 1999, serving clients in numerous industries as part of the Human Capital practice. He holds a Master of Business Administration degree from Harvard Business School and a Bachelor of Arts degree from the College of the Holy Cross, where he has served as a member of the Board of Trustees. He is a life member of the National Eagle Scout Association and has served his local community as a volunteer firefighter and EMT. He resides in Walpole, MA.



## Other Kennedy Catholic Alumni Notables

- Dr. John Dillon '70 resides in Rochester, MN and works for the Mayo Clinic.
- Nancy (Dwyer) Bellini '80 celebrated her 35th anniversary as the Program Director at North East Westchester Special Recreation.
- Lisa (Vesperman) Still '85 is VP, New England Regional Counsel/MA State Counsel for WFG National Title Insurance Company and resides in Massachusetts.
- Stephan Mulvihill '89 is Trade and Treasury Country Head, Spain and Portugal, for Citibank and resides in Spain.
- Matt Kane '11 is an UX/UI Designer and 3D Motion Designer for Fluent, Inc. and resides in New York, NY.



# Why I Donate to Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School

## Mark Girolamo, Class of 1971

I have always had a great affinity for Kennedy Catholic since I graduated in 1971. I grew in many ways during my four years there. Not only did I receive a first-class education, but I had the opportunity to represent the school on the athletic fields, and also to make a number of great lifelong friends. The foundation I built at Kennedy allowed me to succeed at my next academic challenge, the United States Military Academy at West Point. After military service and a rewarding civilian career in Investment Banking, I realized that I had an opportunity to give back to a place that had provided me so much in my personal development and career success.

It was at that time that I began donating to Kennedy Catholic, especially after being made aware that the school was no longer being supported by the Archdiocese, as it had been spun-off as an independent Catholic high school. As such, KCPS must fully fund its own operations out of a few sources of revenue, primarily tuition. Given the cost of running a top program like Kennedy Catholic's, tuition dollars are not enough to both fully fund the school and provide the extras that make it stand out as a place of excellence. Father Vaillancourt has recruited outstanding students and the school's SAT scores are among the very best in Westchester County. It has excellent athletic teams and the school's physical plant is among the best in the area. That said, there are still areas that need significant investment to keep KCPS at the very top of the local secondary school universe. In order to remain viable in a highly competitive education business, KCPS needs to offer the very best to prospective students - great academics, winning athletic programs and top-quality facilities.

I first started giving to the Annual Fund in order for the principal to have discretionary money to attract the best scholars. Once I became more aware of the school's other needs, and given my history with Kennedy Athletics, I began donating to a number of athletics-oriented projects such as the new running track, the field lights and other items. I feel strongly that sports round out a student's experience and also lay the groundwork for a healthy lifestyle for the rest of the person's life. The benefits of a lifetime of fitness are well documented -- and a lesson that I learned well at Kennedy and throughout my adult years both in the military and beyond.

I have supported Kennedy Catholic in other ways as well; last year I led the health team that developed an actionable plan to protect the health of students, faculty and staff during COVID-19 while allowing them to return to



school. I now turn my attention back to helping Kennedy Athletics by taking on a lead role in the construction of a Student Fitness Center.

Father Vaillancourt and I both believe that the students need a place to work out and learn how to pursue a healthy lifestyle. Additionally, our athletic teams need a place to conduct the weight training necessary to successfully compete in today's world of high school sports. Unfortunately, our current workout facility is a closet-like room with a pile of free weights, so there is no such center at our school for either student fitness or athletic training.

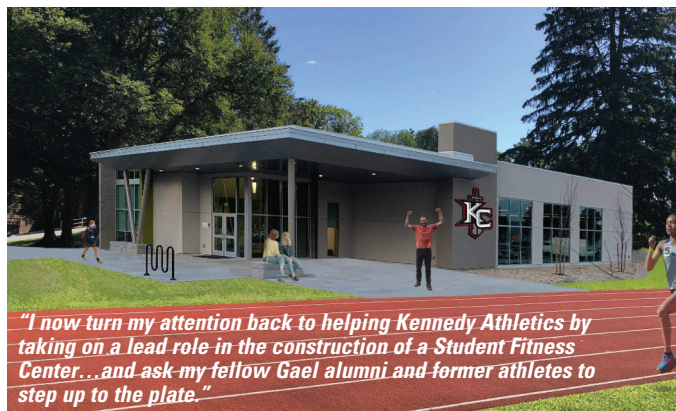
When this project began to take shape, I was excited at the prospect of making it happen and I told Father Vaillancourt that I would be the lead donor on this project and help raise the funds to complete it. We decided it would be fitting to name the center after one of my teachers and friends who entered the building in 1967 at the same time that I started my freshman year. I chose the name "The Sister Janet Meehan Student Fitness Center." Not only did Sister Janet teach at Kennedy for close to 50 years, but she was a coaching legend in girl's track and cross country. She was a seven-time Westchester County Coach of the Year, developing many fine runners for the Gaels. Her leadership allowed for hundreds of girls to experience the thrill of competition and learn how to get fit and maintain a healthy lifestyle for the rest of their lives. Sister Janet's contribution to the development of so many students was outstanding. Who better to honor than Sister Janet with such a building?

Now I turn to my fellow Gael alumni and former athletes to step up to the plate. I have decided to match the first \$300,000 in contributions to this project dollar-for-dollar. If we can achieve this level of donations, the

dream will become a reality. We'll have a top-notch fitness center with weight stations, treadmills, elliptical machines and other equipment rivalling the best of the local fitness club world. We'll have students getting fit and preparing for the rigors of life as well as athletic teams prepared to compete with the best of the Catholic School League. It's a win-win. Let's Go, Gaels. Please join me in making it happen.

Regards,  
Mark Girolamo '71

**To match Mark's generous offer, contact Fred Compton, Director of Advancement, at [fred.compton@kennedycatholic.org](mailto:fred.compton@kennedycatholic.org).**



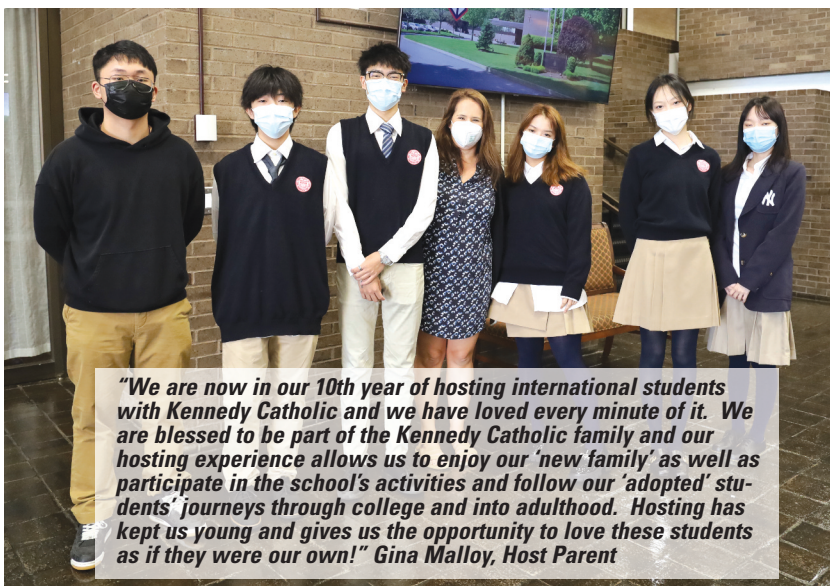
*"I now turn my attention back to helping Kennedy Athletics by taking on a lead role in the construction of a Student Fitness Center...and ask my fellow Gael alumni and former athletes to step up to the plate."*



# Ways You Can Help Support Kennedy Catholic

## The Blessings of Hosting a KC International Student

Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School is blessed to have a diverse student body that allows all students to experience the cultures that make up our world and realize we are all God's children. Our international students add to this experience. "International students widen our local students' understanding of who else and what else is out there, and they add to student life in many ways including bringing in fun activities from their cultures," said Joanna Kalantarov, International Student Coordinator at Kennedy Catholic. Mrs. Kalantarov is also a social studies teacher and Department Chair. "Area students are great with accepting international students into our school and embracing all that they bring," she noted.



Mrs. Kalantarov believes that opening your home to an international student supports the Christian virtues of being a good Catholic. Host parents become like a second parent to these students who travel far from their families, and while you may host a student in your home for a short while, the relationship you build is eternal. "As a host, you provide them support, care, hospitality, warm meals and a seat at the dinner table. All this means so much to the international student. A host family becomes a surrogate family to a student whose parents are so worried about them. It's a rewarding experience to bring one of these great kids into your home and be able to show them what being an American family is," said Mrs. Kalantarov.

Host families are currently needed, especially during the pandemic when international students prefer staying with host families to living in a dorm. If you are interested and would like to learn more, contact Mrs. Kalantarov at [jkalantarov@kennedycatholic.org](mailto:jkalantarov@kennedycatholic.org).

## Ways You Can Help Kennedy Catholic

Founded by the Sisters of the Divine Compassion in 1928, with the current high school campus built in 1966, Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School continues to provide students with a high-quality, modern college-prep education as well as four years of theology to learn about God and His church, contemplative retreat programs, a strong sacramental life and a Christian Community Service program which sets Kennedy students apart. Students are well prepared not only for college, but for a successful life. We do this by employing individuals of the highest professional development who teach and live the ideals of Courage and Compassion and who encourage students to become Christian leaders determined to make a difference for Christ in our world and in the lives of others.

We can not achieve these important goals and overcome any challenges without the help of our many supporters. There are several ways that you can guarantee that all students who desire an excellent, value-centered education and daily life with God and Jesus can receive these gifts from Kennedy Catholic:

- The **Kennedy Catholic Annual Fund** is an effective way to help us provide for whatever the school may need to operate and grow its facilities and programs.
- The **Kennedy Catholic Scholarship Fund** allows students in need to attend our school and reap all the benefits of a Catholic high school education. All donations to this fund go directly to scholarships for students.
- To donate to either fund, go to [www.kennedycatholic.org/giving/](http://www.kennedycatholic.org/giving/)
- Another way to help is to shop AmazonSmile and name Kennedy Catholic as your charity of choice. AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. AmazonSmile donates .05% of your purchases to Kennedy Catholic. Sign into your Amazon account, search "AmazonSmile" and then search for Kennedy Catholic High School in Somers, NY.
- Attend, donate to and/or sponsor our special events, such as the Golf Tournament and Annual Auction. Contact [advancement@kennedycatholic.org](mailto:advancement@kennedycatholic.org) for more information on how to help.



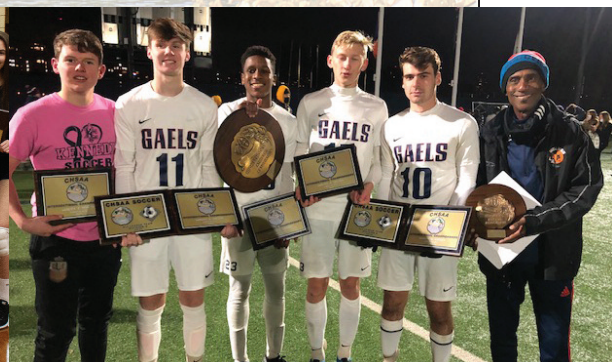


# Why Choose Kennedy Catholic?



Kennedy Catholic should be anyone's first choice for their child to receive an exemplary college-preparatory, faith-based education. Here's why:

- We have one of the highest SAT and ACT test scores in Westchester County: Kennedy Catholic ranks in the top ten percent of SAT scores
- Kennedy Catholic is partnered with several institutions of higher education, including St. John's University, Iona College, Pace University and SUNY Albany, offering our students the opportunity to earn real college credits with over 70 available through our AP and collegiate-level courses
- Our grads go on to the top colleges and universities such as the United States Air Force Academy, the United States Naval Academy, Georgia Tech, Georgetown University, the University of Notre Dame, the University of Pennsylvania and Vassar College
- \$90.7 million in scholarships — that's how much our seniors received in 2020 and 2021
- 20 sports title championships won in the last five years, and 30 students currently accepted to and/or playing NCAA sports
- Focus on Faith: Kennedy Catholic provides all students four years of theology to learn about God and His church, as well as contemplative retreat programs, a strong sacramental life and a Christian Community Service program. KCPS encourages students to become Christian leaders determined to make a difference for Christ in our world and in the lives of others.
- Niche ranks Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School in the top ten (#9 of 19) of Best College Preparatory Private High Schools in Westchester, and in the top third of Best High Schools for Athletics in Westchester (#27 of 83)
- A value-driven education: Kennedy Catholic tuition is lower than almost all of the co-ed, boys or girls-only Catholic high schools in Westchester (NY) and Fairfield (CT) counties.



*"When our son decided to attend Kennedy Catholic, we supported him fully. What he saw in Kennedy Catholic was a unique sports program that would challenge him. He then attended the "Gael for a Day" program and experienced the same professionalism and demand for excellence applied to academics along with the immersed and embedded Faith that creates the Catholic community – he came home and was very clear that this is where he wanted to spend the next four years of his life. Massive challenges due to the pandemic were addressed and overcome by courageous leaders resulting in an amazing year for the students, with excellent results for sports, academics and our Catholic Faith. Kennedy Catholic reacts with professionalism, diligence, excellence and Faith. The school opens in a business-as-usual environment where our children can focus on their academics. These experiences come to fruition through hard work, dedication and a spirit of caring that is unparalleled and are what staff does to provide life experiences to our children and prove that Kennedy Catholic is the best place for our children to grow and prosper." The Covert Family*



# LEADERS-IN- TRAINING

## BLOSSOM AT KENNEDY CATHOLIC

Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School is renowned for providing students an exemplary college preparatory education while instilling faith and devotion and encouraging a life of service. Our students are the leaders of tomorrow, and Kennedy Catholic encourages students to become strong, fair and informed leaders by providing numerous leadership opportunities, including the Student Council.

Student Council allows seniors to develop solid leadership as well as college and career success skills while enhancing the experiences of the entire student body. Members conceive and organize events including dances and other extracurricular activities and fundraising events.

Chengzong (Jason) Li '22 joined the Student Council because he wanted to develop personal leadership skills and contribute to his school community. As an international student he will assist new students with their transi-



Chengzong (Jason) Li

tion and familiarize them with the school community. "Being a member of the Student Council helps me develop my leadership potential, and prepares me to adapt to busy university life in advance while learning better time management skills and expanding my imagination for new ideas," he said.

These young leaders are happy that Kennedy Catholic encourages them to look for more community service opportunities for classmates. Daniel Caracappa '22 notes the "confidence boost" he gets from being listened to and encouraged by staff. "I am no longer afraid to speak my mind and pitch my ideas to the group even if they could be voted down. Another skill that I have learned is how to work as a team," Daniel said. He appreciates that Kennedy Catholic gave the Student Council freedom to come up with their own ideas and approach the school's administra-

tion, and as a result they were able to hold the first-ever popular Senior Sunrise event.

Representative Mairead Dooley '22 was able to fulfill her long-term dream of serving on the Student Council to help bring "positivity" to the student body. She was inspired by her two older siblings' leadership in the KCPS Student Council. "I believe by helping the student body I will be able to improve my organizational, time-management and leadership skills, which are beneficial to my future college and professional careers, as well as become a more confident, outgoing leader and student," she said. Mairead believes that the shared positivity, values and morals of Kennedy Catholic's student body and staff allow the Student Council to be successful.

Planning events, managing social media and serving as a liaison to school leadership are skills Cara Curtin '22 is honing. "Kennedy Pride is a culture which thrives in Student



Daniel Caracappa



Mairead Dooley





**Cara Curtin**

Council-led events for all of the Kennedy Catholic community to enjoy. I have seen Kennedy grow and change with Student Council representation, and I understand what makes a school year successful for both the faculty and students," she said. Cara believes that the advantages of being a student leader include learning to be flexible, negotiate, thrive in a group and how to bounce back from setbacks. "Our ability to listen to our student body and negotiate with everyone has given us the opportunity to learn that we must be respectful and compassionate when being leaders," she added.

Maggie Coyle '22 believes that it is both a great honor and privilege to be elected a Student Council representative. "Being a member of this distinguished group of six seniors will help to further develop my leadership and communication skills as I enter the col-

lege admissions process and college. I believe that I have grown more confident in my abilities as a person, and it has made me very thankful for everything that our school has provided for us, as well as everything that God has given us," Maggie explained, adding that "Being a member of this group helps to build upon Catholic teachings of reaching out to people in need through planned community service and fundraisers. As an individual leader, there is a sense of having your own mind to solve issues presented by administration, and as a group we all share the common goal of making Kennedy even better than it already is."

Overall the members agree on the value of the skills they are learning because Kennedy Catholic gives them the opportunity to live and learn. Jared Crane '22 joined because he noted how "enriching and beneficial" the experience was for his brother, Class of 2020.



**Maggie Coyle**



**Jared Crane**

"Ever since then I knew I wanted to be a member so that I could participate in helping Kennedy continue to grow and flourish," he said. Jared points out the skills the students learn: "I have learned how to effectively communicate as a team member, pitch ideas and run events for large crowds. Before I was on Student Council I was somewhat of a shy person; I would always be nervous to talk to teachers and I never dreamed of addressing the student body on my own. But after joining the council I have flourished into a more outgoing person and I have become a role model and example for all students," he explained.

All of the members believe that Kennedy Catholic provides the necessary support and encouragement to help them learn and grow as leaders, both in and out of Student Council. As a result, the entire school benefits.

## KCPS Students Are National Merit Commended Students!

Six Kennedy Catholic seniors were named Commended Students by the National Merit® Scholarship Program, an annual academic competition for recognition and college undergraduate scholarships conducted by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. This is a prestigious distinction, as over 1.5 million juniors in about 21,000 high schools entered the 2022 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the 2020 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®) their junior year, and only about 34,000 students are named Commended Students for their high SAT Scores. Congratulations to Ailish O'Gara, Frank Muscarella, Ethan Harianto, Megan Flaherty, Lauren Campise and Peter Desimini (pictured in the photo left to right with Father Mark Vaillancourt, President/Principal).





## STAFF *INTERVIEW*

Father Breslin



# Kennedy Catholic's *Commitment to Nurturing Our Faith*

While providing a modern, rigorous Regents college-preparatory curriculum that meets the needs of today's youth and tomorrow's future leaders is paramount, Kennedy Catholic also educates young people in the sound doctrine of Catholic faith to prepare them for living out Christ's message of service to the world.

The mission statement of the Sisters of the Divine Compassion, who founded Kennedy Catholic, is "Empowered by God's love, we are called to be the compassionate presence of God in the world." This sentiment is strongly reflected in Kennedy's own mission statement:

*"We are strong and committed Christian leaders who are*

*determined to make a difference for Christ in our world and the lives of others. Through the development of mind, body and spirit we will strive always for excellence and the highest standards in Catholic education."*

To help instill faith, Kennedy Catholic provides all students with four years of theology to learn about God and His church, a strong sacramental life, a Christian Community Service program and contemplative retreat programs. Serving as our spiritual leader is President/Principal Father Mark Vaillancourt. Joining him are Deacon Alfred Impallomeni, Theology Department Chair and Director of Guidance; Theology faculty Mrs. Katie Glembotzky, Dr. Ilaria Tedesco, Mr. Charles



Junjulas, Sister Mary McCaffrey and Mrs. Karen Ramos; and now Father Matthew Breslin, Campus Minister, who joined KCPS in the 2021-22 school year.

Father Breslin is a newly ordained priest for the Archdiocese of New York, recently assigned as Chaplain to Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School. Father Breslin has a history of working with high school students as he was the director of Camp Veritas, an international Catholic summer camp for teenagers.

"I am excited to be assigned to Kennedy Catholic, as well as nearby St. Joseph's Church. I ask that everyone pray for me as I begin my priestly ministry, and I assure everyone of my prayers," said Father Breslin.

Among other responsibilities, Father Breslin will lead all the retreats that the students attend throughout the year, prepare students for reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation, offer Adoration and Confession every Friday during lunch hours, and be available to students at any time.

Father Breslin felt the call to the priesthood for most of his life, since he was at least eight years-old and asked the question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" and answered "I want to be an NBA player or a priest." As he grew older, he started to fear what others might think of him if he started to live his faith externally, but ultimately Father Breslin could no longer resist the Lord calling him to the priesthood and knew that this would lead him to true peace. He was

ordained a priest on May 29, 2021 at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, New York by Timothy Cardinal Dolan.

Religious life runs in the Breslin family, as Father Breslin's sister, Sr. Mary Strength of Martyrs, is a member of the Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matara since May 2013, just months before Father Breslin entered the seminary after graduating high school. Now he is part of the robust religious life at Kennedy Catholic.

On campus, Community Mass is held once a month and is an opportunity for the school to gather as a community of faith. Prior to the pandemic, these masses were held in the auditorium and featured performances from the school chorus and readings by students. For the last two years everyone had the privilege of enjoying the fresh morning air on the front lawn as we celebrated the sacrifice of the mass together, and now thanks to the tech team we safely celebrate mass with half of the student body in the auditorium while the other half views a livestream from their classrooms. Every Friday, Kennedy Catholic offers the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in our school chapel.

Taking four years of Theology is an essential feature of the Kennedy Catholic student's identity and development. In these courses, students receive a full education in Catholic doctrine, tradition, sacraments, scripture and morality. Theology classes are often the center of charitable efforts such as this year's Pro-Life Club collection for Birthright of

Peekskill and last year's baby supply drive for the Sisters of Life. Each Theology class also participates in the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the Advent and Lenten seasons in preparation for Christmas and Easter.

Our retreat program is an opportunity for students to travel with their Theology classes out of the classroom and engage in a day of reflection, prayer and peace. The seniors' retreat at Graymoor Spiritual Life Center allows them to hear lectures from guest speakers and participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. By the time they graduate, Kennedy Catholic students have received a complete and premier Catholic education, fulfilling the school mission.





# ***Boys and Girls Lacrosse Outstanding Season***

## **BOYS LAX WINS SIXTH STRAIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP!**

For six consecutive seasons, the Kennedy Catholic boys lacrosse (LAX) program has been a powerhouse in local NY sports, adding six more championship trophies to their display shelves. For the 2021 season, they worked harder than ever as COVID-19 still lingered and ended with a 10-7 record and another championship title.

The team started in spring 2021 by winning the first six of eight games, then lost a few until they conquered important matches — first with a 12-5 Section 1 win against Horace Greeley High School (Chappaqua) and then a sound victory at the CHSAA Class A Championship game against Monsignor Farrell High

School (Staten Island) with 14 goals versus only two for the opponent.

"It was our best game of the year," said Coach Vin Savastano. "The team executed the game plan perfectly. We jumped out to a 3-0 first quarter lead by playing inspired lacrosse. The boys exploded for a 7-second quarter goal en route to a 10-0 halftime lead, winning 14-2. This was our most incredible team game we've played in our previous five championships. After missing a season due to Covid our team was just so excited to be back on the field, especially our seniors. They have given their heart and soul to this program and they weren't going to allow our streak to be broken. I am so proud of our team," Coach Savastano said. Coach should know a good lacrosse team effort; he has coached lacrosse for 31 years, 11 years for Kennedy Catholic boys LAX.

Coach Savastano believes that KC's great supportive fans helped get the win. "The Championship game was played in an incredible atmosphere. We have such great fans and they came out in full force screaming and yelling, giving us added incentive







and boosting our game," he noted, adding "The way the student-athletes compete and work hard combined with our family atmosphere makes our program very special."

But of course he gives the most credit to where credit is due...the Gael boys who played their hearts out. "Captain and defenseman PJ Wu '21 (now at Northeastern University) was the heart and soul of our program and a great team leader. He had 101 ground balls, 25 take-aways and was named our first-ever Academic All-American and Defenseman of the Year," Coach Savastano said, adding that the team's other captains were instrumental for such a victorious season. "Jack McNerney '21 (UConn) was one of the best attackmen I've coached in my 31 years coaching and a fierce competitor who scored against everybody this season, with 57 goals and 29 assists overall and five goals and three assists in the championship game. And Brendan Sullivan '21 (Georgia Tech) had 35 goals and 34 assists for the season, with a tremendous championship game recording six goals and two assists," he noted.

"Other key players included Captain Matt Santos '21 (Post University), Connor Baia '23, our midfielder and outstanding face-off man who scooped up 160 ground balls and won 237 face-offs; defenseman Nick Mittag '22 who was a key contributor on defense, and goalie Andrew Gentile '23, who stepped up huge for us in the goal. Major contributors to the team and win included Mike Oddo '21 (Georgetown University), Quin Sherry '21 (Michigan State), Nick Quas '21 (University of Tennessee), Brendan Liddy '21, Liam Mulholland '21, Andrew Bleakley '21, Jack Brown '22, Fin McConnell '24 and Logan Raynor '24," according to Coach Savastano.

For Coach Savastano, this win marked his 350th coaching career win, making it extra special. He also credits and thanks his brother Nick, who was co-head coach for the past ten years up until this season, and President/Principal Father Mark Vaillancourt, Athletic Director Dom Tassone, Admissions Director Brian Bruder and Alumni and Advancement Director Fred Compton for always giving the team full support in whatever was needed. "We are like a team - whatever we need for the program they are there for us and without them none of this success would have been possible,"







said Coach Savastano. "I also owe a lot of thanks to my amazing coaching staff: Scott Berniker, MJ Garrity, Greg Brann and Hunter Trippodo. They are all tremendous to the success of this program; the players benefited from their knowledge and dedication and I can't thank them enough."

The coaching and team philosophy for the Kennedy boys

lacrosse team is "work hard, have fun and get the best out of every player." Creating a family atmosphere and helping each player become successful in life is also very important. As one can see by the number of championship titles and college acceptances, this philosophy is a winning one for the Gaels.



## KC Girls Lacrosse Scores Big With a City Championship Title



The Kennedy Catholic girls lacrosse team returned to and conquered the fields last spring with not just a 10-3 record, but a 17-5 win over Xaverian High School (Brooklyn) to clinch the League Championship after enjoying an 18-10 win over Section 1 Ossining High School.

This was a wonderful way to begin coaching at Kennedy Catholic for Kevin Paglino, who took the girls team in his first year coaching straight to the championship title. "I was lucky enough

to have a great group of senior leadership at each position. Abby Mascia '21 (Pitt) dominated the midfield, Caroline Girolamo '21 (Plattsburgh) and Ava Steinmann '21 (Auburn) controlled the play at the attack and Grace Terceira '21 (Indiana University) and Jessica Petrullo '21 (Clemson) were relied on heavily at the defensive side of the field. We also had some stand-out underclassmen players in Carina Daniele '23, CeCe DeLarco '23, Noura O'Reilly '23 and Camille Stackhouse '24," Coach Paglino noted.



Coach Paglino brought his extensive experience, skills and knowledge of lacrosse to Kennedy Catholic with the goal to bring the girls team to the top. He has played at the high school, college and adult league levels for over 35 years and has coached girls lacrosse for seven years. Coach Paglino's personal coaching philosophy emphasizes commitment and effectiveness. "Hard work and fitness combined with the willingness to learn is important, as is the focus to improve individually within a strong team culture; so is being accountable to one another and realizing that it is the team first," he said.

This philosophy, along with the hard work and talents of the Lady Gaels, led to the

***"Hard work and fitness combined with the willingness to learn is important, as is the focus to improve individually within a strong team culture; so is being accountable to one another and realizing that it is the team first."***

team game. They possessed the ball and limited their mistakes and turnovers. The team played with patience and confidence, controlling the play from start to finish."

He anticipates another great season for this school year, especially with the team having the benefit of off-season training and getting-to-know-you sessions. "We have a lot of returning talent mixed with some new but experienced student-athletes coming in this year. Our immediate goals are to work hard, improve as a team and perform to our potential each game. Hopefully we are fortunate enough that this approach gets us an opportunity to represent Kennedy Catholic in a State Final game," said Coach Paglino.



winning attitude and season. He credits the players' resiliency for the team's success. "Everything was different for them this season — they had the challenges of COVID-19 and the voice and demands of a new coach, yet they worked hard and earned the championship," Coach Paglino said.

Regarding how they won so many games, including the much cherished League Championship game, Coach Paglino explained that "The girl student-athletes played a strong, clean

With the continued support of Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School, this goal can become a reality. Coach Paglino believes the school provides an outstanding academic reputation which attracts well-rounded and committed student-athletes. "Our Athletic Director Dom Tassone and the other coaches at Kennedy Catholic have been very welcoming and have helped tremendously in making it a seamless transition for us all," Coach Paglino asserted.



# 2021 Kennedy Catholic Golf Classic

By Mairead Dooley, Class of 2022



On Thursday, September 30, I had the pleasure of working with my fellow Student Council members at the 2021 Kennedy Catholic Golf Classic. This annual event, which took place at the Mahopac Golf Club, brings together Kennedy Catholic alumni, parents of students, administration and friends for a great day of golfing! The event had an excellent turnout of 120 guests.

Upon arrival, golfers were treated to a delicious breakfast inside the club's dining area and received a custom Kennedy Catholic towel and sleeve of golf balls. Then it was time to golf on a beautiful day! Later in the day, dinner was served in the dining room and on the veranda. Our raffles and 50/50 chances were generously supported by our guests. Attendees enjoyed the proceeds of the raffle, engaged in a silent auction, and learned about the Student Fitness Center that is in the works.

Thanks to the help of our many donors and those who organized the event, we were able to raise nearly \$30,000 in net proceeds that will go a long way in supporting Catholic Education at Kennedy Catholic.





# Annual Giving

Thanks to the kindness and generosity of our charitable patrons, Kennedy Catholic is able to flourish. From building improvements to educational scholarships, your donations help improve the excellent education Kennedy Catholic provides. If you haven't already contributed to our on-going success and you have the means to do so, please consider joining our cadre of supporters by contributing.

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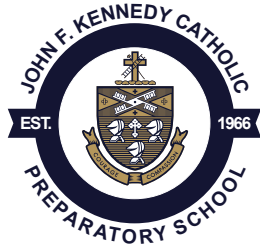
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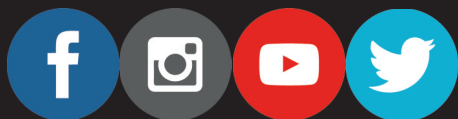
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